WHAT DOES THE CHILDREN AND TEENS’ ONLINE PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT DO?

COPPA 2.0 amends the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998—a 25-year-old law protecting children under age 13—to strengthen protections related to the online collection, use, and disclosure of personal information of minors under age 17. In July 2023, the Senate Commerce Committee unanimously approved the bill.

HOW ARE CHILDREN AND TEENS UNIQUELY VULNERABLE TO ONLINE DATA COLLECTION?

Young people's brains develop gradually, and they do not become capable of critically assessing what they see online until they are older. For example, most kids cannot distinguish an ad from content until they are at least 8 years old, and most children do not realize that ads can be customized to them. This enables businesses to manipulate kids and teens without them even realizing they are being manipulated.

Children and teens are also prone to oversharing without understanding the consequences of their sharing. They believe that the information they share remains on their device or within an app or game, and that deleting that information on the device or within the app will delete it from the internet. They also do not understand that an app may gather information about them from sources outside the app.

WHY DO WE NEED AN UPDATE TO THE EXISTING LAW?

Current COPPA does not protect kids and teens on the internet as it looks today. Social media and other online platforms are contributing to a youth mental health crisis we are seeing in our nation, and the glaring lack of privacy protections that kids and teens have online plays a key role. Online platforms have become so powerful because of the troves of data they amass on kids and teens. Tech companies use this data to serve up algorithmic recommendations and amplify harmful content, including posts promoting eating disorders and self-harm, to young users with extreme precision to increase their engagement. Passing stronger data privacy protections for minors is the first step toward making the internet healthier and safer for young users.

WHAT WILL COPPA 2.0 SPECIFICALLY DO?

- Expand protections to teens age 13–16 by requiring their opt-in consent before data collection
- Ban targeted advertising to all covered minors
- Close a loophole in COPPA that allows sites and apps to turn a blind eye to young people using their services and evade compliance
- Create an "eraser button" for parents and kids requiring companies to delete personal information of minors
- Minimize the amount of data collected and used on minors

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2 Children's Commissioner, Who Knows What About Me? (Nov. 18, 2018).