January 20, 2022

Chairman Pallone
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2107 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers
House Energy and Commerce Committee
1035 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairwoman Murray
Senate HELP Committee
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Burr
Senate HELP Committee
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Pallone, Chairwoman Murray, and Ranking Members McMorris Rodgers and Burr,

We are now living in a time when technology is no longer a privilege, but a necessity for daily life. Research by Common Sense has been tracking how device reliance and use has grown over the years and found that kids under 8 spend nearly 2 1/2 hours a day with screens, a number that nearly doubles for tweens (4h44), and triples for teens (7h22) - and that is not counting schoolwork. It is clear that we need a better understanding of how growing up in the digital age impacts child development. In pursuit of this scientific research, we are writing today to urge you to support H.R. 2161 and S.971, the “Children and Media Research Advancement Act,” otherwise known as the CAMRA Act.

The CAMRA Act is a bipartisan, bicameral piece of legislation that would authorize funding for the National Institutes of Health to conduct and support longitudinal, independent, and scientific research on how infants, children, and adolescents are impacted by exposure to and use of technology and media. The program would provide a more nuanced understanding of the cognitive, physical, and social-emotional risks and benefits of technology usage on child development. It has generated support among not only policymakers, but also among industry leaders, academics, consumer groups, pediatricians, and parents.

The results of the unbiased scientific research studies enabled by CAMRA will provide the technology industry as well as brands with the research needed to develop products that are healthier for children. It will also generate data that will help pediatricians provide the guidance that parents need to navigate the digital world with their kids. With a steady stream of scientific data, lawmakers will have the information they need to understand the scope of today’s problems and to be prepared to address what issues may arise in the future.

Existing research is currently limited to outdated methodology and has not kept pace with the vast array of new technologies that have developed over the last several years. CAMRA would provide an avenue to update research approaches and will leave us better prepared to answer questions about new and emerging technologies, such as augmented reality, cryptocurrency, and algorithms.
geared towards children. We need a robust, evidence-based approach to support the evolution of technology law and regulation that will meet the needs of families and kids as they continue to use technology.

Technology is here to stay. And there is a growing consensus among industry leaders, policymakers, pediatricians, and families that we need to do better to ensure our children's safety online. Now is the time to act, for this and future generations of young tech users.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and we hope you will continue to support our efforts to make the virtual world a better, more accessible, and safer place for all our nation's kids and families.

Sincerely,

Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development
Common Sense Media
Craig Newmark, Founder of Craigslist and Newmark Philanthropies
Facebook
Fairplay
Family Online Safety Institute
HP Inc.
Joseph P. Salvo, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Sesame Workshop
The LEGO Group
Mayor Libby Schaaf of Oakland, CA
Michael Preston, Ph.D., Executive Director, Joan Ganz Cooney Center
Microsoft
Newsela
Rachel Barr, Ph.D., Georgetown University
Remind
Robert Lustig, M.D., M.S.L., University of California, San Francisco
TikTok
Twitter
UNICEF USA