What does the Kids Online Safety Act do?
KOSA requires companies to prioritize children and teens’ health and well-being over profits and engagement. Under KOSA, covered platforms have a duty to act in the best interests of minors under age 17 who use that platform’s products or services. This means covered platforms must prevent or mitigate harms posed by the platform, and offer parents and minors safeguards and tools like strong default privacy settings. KOSA also imposes transparency requirements that would shed more light on how these online platforms operate.

What online harms does KOSA require platforms to prevent or mitigate?
- Anxiety, depression, eating disorders, substance use disorders, and suicidal behaviors
- Patterns of use that indicate or encourage addiction-like behavior
- Physical violence, online bullying, or harassment of a minor
- Sexual exploitation and abuse
- Promotion and marketing of narcotic drugs, tobacco products, gambling, or alcohol
- Predatory, unfair, or deceptive marketing practices, or other financial harms

How does KOSA promote transparency?
Covered platforms must conduct annual independent audits that identify the risks of harm to minors and provide access to data for experts to conduct independent research.

Why is this legislation necessary?
Youth in our country are facing a mental health crisis, and we cannot ignore online platforms’ role in that. The U.S. has traditionally put the full burden on parents to keep their children safe online. This does not get to the root problem of how companies design platforms to maximize engagement, often at the cost of a child’s well-being, such as through the use of algorithms that amplify harmful content. KOSA would finally impose responsibility on companies for how their platforms harm minors, while also giving minors and parents more meaningful controls.