



**Statement for the Record by  
Chamber of Progress and the Family Online Safety Institute**

October 26, 2021

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal  
Chairman, Subcommittee on  
Consumer Protection,  
Product Safety, and Data Security  
Senate Committee on Commerce,  
Science, and Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on  
Consumer Protection,  
Product Safety, and Data Security  
Senate Committee on Commerce,  
Science, and Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blumenthal and Ranking Member Blackburn:

Chamber of Progress and the Family Online Safety Institute appreciate the opportunity to submit a statement for the record for the hearing entitled, "Protecting Kids Online: Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube," being held by the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Data Security.

Chamber of Progress is a new progressive tech industry group fighting for public policies that will build a fairer, more inclusive country in which all people benefit from technological leaps. The Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI) is an international, non-profit organization which works to make the online world safer for kids and their families. Through research, resources, events, and special projects, FOSI promotes a culture of responsibility online and encourages a sense of digital citizenship for all.

Following the recent disclosure of Facebook internal documents, it's clear that both the tech industry and Congress have work to do to protect the well-being of young people in the digital sphere. The documents released earlier this month surface important questions about the impact of social media on teens, including the effect of content that amplifies body image issues, depression, and anxiety. The whistleblower documents have also elevated the issue of teen well-being online across multiple platforms.

When assessing how to better protect teen health, it's important that policymakers take into account the advice of experts who best understand how to support and protect teen well-being and the challenges that teens face online. From child advocates<sup>1</sup> to pediatricians<sup>2</sup> to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fosi.org/good-digital-parenting/robust-research-and-data-the-foundation-of-effective-screen-time-recommendations-for-families>

<sup>2</sup> [https://energycommerce.house.gov/sites/democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/files/documents/Witness%20Testimony\\_Radesky\\_HE\\_2021.10.20.pdf](https://energycommerce.house.gov/sites/democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/files/documents/Witness%20Testimony_Radesky_HE_2021.10.20.pdf)

independent researchers<sup>3</sup>, numerous experts have recently made it clear that more research is needed to better understand the effect of digital media use on teens, and what protections would help mitigate negative health impacts.

That's why it is important for Congress to pass the Children And Media Research Advancement (CAMRA) Act, introduced by Senator Edward Markey and Representative Jamie Raskin, to provide a detailed understanding of the impact of today's media on children's mental health and development.

The CAMRA Act would authorize the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to lead research on children's technology use and health outcomes including addiction, bullying, and depression. By researching children's exposure to, use of, and reaction to new media, this legislation would provide lawmakers, educators, parents, and social media platforms with a better understanding of how to create safeguards for kids online. In the Senate and House, this legislation has received broad bipartisan support from lawmakers interested in better understanding how media impacts the cognitive, physical, and emotional development of children.

The interplay between media and the mental well-being of children and teens is highly complex. We already know that some social media use, particularly to stay connected with loved ones, can improve mental and emotional health for children.<sup>4</sup> The whistleblower documents uncovered this month also show how social media can sometimes contribute to negative health outcomes. When legislating in the area of teen mental well-being, it is critical that lawmakers take an evidence-based approach that relies on the work of experienced and independent research teams.

As your committee continues its investigation into the impact of digital media use on children's well-being, we urge you to support the CAMRA Act, which would provide a foundation for additional legislative action on this issue. When it comes to protecting kids online, anecdotal evidence and company-funded research does not provide the thorough understanding needed to pass substantive legislation that protects children's mental and emotional well-being.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue and for holding today's hearing. As children today have more and more of their social and educational experiences move online, it is vital that lawmakers ensure families and kids are protected in the digital world.

Sincerely,

Adam Kovacevich  
Founder and CEO  
Chamber of Progress

Stephen Balkam  
Founder and CEO  
Family Online Safety Institute

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2021/10/06/1043138622/facebook-instagram-teens-mental-health>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/CYBER.2020.0284>