

# **What They're Saying | The Eyes on the Board Act**

*Introduced by Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Ted Budd (R-N.C.) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.)*

## **American College of Pediatricians**

“The American College of Pediatricians supports efforts to limit access to social media in public schools as well as efforts to limit screen time for children. Social media distracts from educational goals of schools and is often a source of bullying and depression. It also can undermine parental guidance for their children. Screen time, even with desirable content, can be associated with headaches and sleep problems, and is often inferior to in-person teaching. Pornography, with all its negative consequences, is often accessed by students on school equipment and during the school day. The proposed ‘Eyes on the Board Act’ makes an honest effort through limitations of Federal funding to protect children from the harmful effects of excessive screen time, social media, and exposure to pornography.”

## **Parents Defending Education Action**

“Excessive use of social media is taking a devastating toll on America’s youth. Whether it’s their mental health, academic performance, or ability to focus, children are suffering from serious consequences of spending too much time on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.

“Addressing this widespread crisis should be a priority for every elected official in government. That is why Parents Defending Education Action is proud to support Sens. Cruz, Budd, and Capito’s Eyes on the Board Act. This is exactly the kind of forward thinking that will help ease parents’ concerns, restore transparency for families, and help kids succeed in the classroom.

“We look forward to working with the Senators, and all co-sponsors, in ensuring this bill becomes a reality so we can make meaningful progress in protecting children from the dangers of social media.”

## **Heritage Action**

“As children are experiencing monumental learning loss after the COVID pandemic, the last thing they need is for social media to distract them in the classroom. Schools have a duty to protect children from harmful online content on subsidized electronic devices, and parents deserve to know their children are actually learning. The Eyes on the Board Act prevents big tech from taking advantage of students and reduces the harmful effects of excessive social media usage,” Ryan Walker, Executive Vice President, Heritage Action

## **American Principles Project**

“Parents are understandably worried about the role of technology in education after the so-called “digital learning” fiasco during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the fact that there is little evidence the E-Rate program as currently constituted has improved education outcomes, it's obvious that reform is needed. The Eyes on the Board Act ensures that federal dollars are only going to technology in schools that is being used for the purpose of learning, and it prevents social media companies from preying on kids during school hours. Kids should be learning how to read, not how to scroll a feed. APP is proud to support this important legislation from Sen. Cruz, Sen. Budd, and Sen. Capito,” Jon Schweppe, Policy Director, American Principles Project

## **Family Policy Alliance**

“Children today deserve to be protected from the harms of social media, especially when they use these platforms unsupervised and away from their parents. Family Policy Alliance is thankful that Senator Cruz introduced the commonsense *Eyes on the Board Act* to ensure that school time does not become social media time. By granting full access to their child’s school internet safety policies, parents are empowered to protect their child online even when they send them to school,” Ruth Ward, Director of Government Affairs, Family Policy Alliance

## **The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America**

“The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (the nation’s largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization) appreciates Senator Cruz’s introduction of the ‘Eyes on Board Act.’ This legislation properly seeks to bring some transparency and accountability to the fraught arena of social media – especially focusing upon those who are very vulnerable, and for who we are most responsible – our children. The internet, and social media platforms, remain a technology of promise and peril – for children and for adults. This kind of legislation, and other proposals, that seek to reasonably regulate access is valuable for our society.”

## **The Institute for Family Studies**

"With the U.S. Surgeon General issuing an advisory warning in May that access to social media is causing a ‘national youth mental health crisis,’ it is inexcusable for the E-Rate program to be expanded without establishing safeguards to ensure that kids are not being driven into deeper addiction by federal policy. Given the stakes, we should be doing all we can to reduce the contact that minors have with these predatory platforms. The Eyes on the Board Act is a simple, common-sense law that every member of Congress should support, that claws back the federal subsidization of social media addiction through our school system. The Institute for Family Studies is honored to endorse this critical legislation,” Michael Toscano, Executive Director, Institute for Family Studies

## **Concerned Women for America**

“Kids are sent to school to learn, not to spend hours on social media,” said Penny Nance CEO and President of Concerned Women for America, the nation’s largest public policy women’s organization. “Parents deserve complete transparency from schools about what is going on in the classrooms, especially when it comes to screen time. Parents should not have to worry about what their children are viewing on social media sites on government subsidized electronic devices. The Eyes on the Board Act is a commonsense measure to keep the focus of education where it should be, on educating children.”

## **Clare Morell, Senior Policy Analyst, The Ethics and Public Policy Center**

“Social media is harmful to children. We need to keep our children’s learning environments free of social media’s distractions and harms. The Eyes on the Board Act offers a narrow, straightforward solution to ensure that government-subsidized internet services in schools and on school buses does not allow for access to social media. This Act would also help mitigate the dangerous network effects produced by social media that change the entire social dynamic for students today by helping to keep their use out of the school day and out of the school social environment for kids,” Clare Morell, Senior Policy Analyst, The Ethics and Public Policy Center

## **Texas Public Policy Foundation**

“TPPF applauds Senator Cruz’s continued efforts to empower parents and keep kids safe online.

“Research demonstrates that social media is a harmful, addictive product—today’s ‘cigarette.’ It’s very design and underlying business model are to keep eyeballs glued to screens, exposing kids to horrific content such as cyberbullying, violence, pornography, body dysmorphia, self-harm and suicide.

“This bill is a logical extension of existing federal law—the federal government should not subsidize access to such harmful content and distract children from learning. Instead, scarce taxpayer dollars should improve educational access and quality for children. Social media has no place in schools. It’s time to get back to learning,” The Honorable Zach Whiting, Senior Fellow of Technology Policy at The Texas Public Policy Foundation

## **America First Policy Institute**

“TikTok and other big tech companies and unsupervised online access can harm our small children and young people. Closing loopholes exposing our small children to explicit or harmful material online, predators, and other dangers should always be a priority. Senator Cruz is on the right path as this bill works to keep our children safe,” Laurie Todd-Smith, PH.D., Director, Center for the American Child, America First Policy Institute

## **Bull Moose Project**

“The FCC’s E-Rate program is an important tool which helps provide internet access to schools and libraries in the modern age of learning. However, the government should not be in the business of helping kids circumvent their parents by providing unregulated and unmonitored access to harmful social media sites. It is well known that social media has been proven to be harmful to kids, exacerbating issues such as depression, anxiety, and enabling cyberbullying. We have seen ACT scores drop for the 6th year in a row, providing even more evidence that we need to focus more on learning rather than posting. This legislation is crucial in the fight to protect our children against harmful social media sites and algorithms. The Bull Moose Project enthusiastically endorses its passage,” Ziven Havens, Policy Director, Bull Moose Project

## **New York Young Republicans Club**

“School is a place to learn, but that cannot happen when overstepping government agencies like the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) use taxpayer money to keep children braindead and glued to screens.

“At a time when American students’ educational attainment continues to regress, one might expect federal agencies to promulgate policies that help students learn. Bureaucrats like FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel intend to do the opposite. “Under Chairwoman Rosenworcel, the FCC plans to expand its \$4 billion E-Rate program, originally intended to fund digital technology in classrooms and libraries exclusively for learning purposes, to bring unsupervised wifi access to school buses. Notably, E-Rate does not require that schools restrict access to social media apps or addictive websites. In a classroom setting, teachers (ought to) provide some oversight of students’ internet usage; on school buses, that tenuous control goes out the window.

“The FCC plans to force everyday telephone account holders to pay for the luxury of wifi on school buses so that young students can rot their brains on TikTok during the ride. This ‘identifies’ as learning just as much as drag queen story hours do. Chairwoman Rosenworcel insists that this latest money-grabbing scheme will help ‘close the homework gap’ pretending that students will work from school buses rather than falling into the addictive traps of TikTok, Instagram, or other platforms engineered to capture their attention.

“Schools must focus on educational attainment, and government funds must enforce that paradigm. Giving children unsupervised and unrestricted access to disruptive social media platforms and upending parents’ attempts to wean them off Communist-owned and -inspired platforms represents tremendous overreach.

“The Eyes on the Board Act would cut off schools that decline to block access to social media services on devices and networks funded by the E-Rate program. In addition, the Act would make schools’ internet safety policies publicly accessible and obligate schools to adopt screen time policies. These are simple, common sense measures that put parents in control and protect children from predatory corporate (and, in the case of TikTok, Communist government-backed) entities.

“The New York Young Republican Club commends Senator Ted Cruz for introducing this Act and Senators Ted Budd and Shelley Moore Capito for co-sponsoring it. The Biden Administration has shown its willingness to leverage the federal regulatory system to supersede statute and to violate the will and interests of the American people, and Congress must rein them in.”