



May 30, 2025

Honorable Phil Scott
Governor
109 State Street, Pavilion
Montpelier, VT 05609

Dear Governor Scott,

[Common Sense Media](#) writes in strong support of the bipartisan Vermont Age Appropriate Design Code (S.69 or the “Kids Code”) and urges you to sign the bill into law. With more than 150 million users worldwide, including over 750 registered users in Vermont alone, Common Sense Media is the largest organization dedicated to ensuring that children and families thrive—and remain safe—in the rapidly-changing digital age.

Kids' internet usage is at an [all-time high](#). Teens spend an average of 4.5 hours per day on their phones, with about a quarter of them spending as much as 5 to 8 hours in front of their screens, every day. Nearly [half of teens](#) report feeling addicted to their phones. Teens connect with each other through social media platforms at higher rates than any other group, report that these platforms form a larger part of their social life than any other group, and have outsized levels of difficulty stopping technology use once they've started. Younger children are also spending more time online, our recent report found that [40% of children](#) have a tablet by age 2, and nearly 1 in 4 have a personal cell phone by age 8. These younger children may spend less unsupervised time online than teens.

Social media companies intentionally use manipulative design features to increase kids' engagement online in order to make more money from advertising. Features like endless scroll, low friction designs, and repeat notifications (or 'nudging') pull youth back into apps and extend their attention and time online. Indeed, [research](#) shows that popular social media apps, like TikTok, provide low-friction access to infinite, personalized content which short circuits kids' and teens' attention and drives compulsive engagement. Profit motives are to blame—platforms create these features to promote user engagement and increase ad revenue, regardless of the negative consequences. Ultimately, these features endanger our kids by compromising their privacy, driving kids toward harmful and extreme content, and exposing risky contacts and behaviors online.

Business models built around maximizing users' time spent online and highly sophisticated individual targeting enable harm to many of our kids. The public and even teens are increasingly aware of these harmful social media practices. Newly released Common Sense Media [research](#) revealed widespread distrust of major technology companies among teens.



Over half of teens surveyed report that they do not trust tech companies to make ethical and responsible design decisions (53%) or prioritize user safety over profits (62%). And [polling](#) shows that parents of all political backgrounds support establishing guardrails to protect kids online - guardrails that do not exist today for Vermont's kids and teens.

The Vermont Kids Code is essential to enhance online safety for Vermont's kids and teens by protecting them from the impacts of the addictive features of social media platforms while preserving their ability to use the internet to learn, explore, and find community. Specifically, the Kids Code mandates that social media companies adjust their algorithms and the overall design of their products to make them less addictive - and harmful - for Vermont's kids and teens. It established critical guard rails that protect the privacy of these young users and their data and requires transparency about the data use and design practices of the platforms. Finally, under the Kids Code these social media platforms must have tools and default privacy and safety settings to help kids and teens be safer online and have more control over their experiences.

We are urging you to sign the Vermont Kids Code into law because Vermont's kids and teens need businesses to start to put youth well-being ahead of company profits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly Grosshans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Holly Grosshans
Senior Counsel, Tech Policy
Common Sense Media

Cc: Jason Maulucci and Jason Gibbs