

August 4, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chair U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

CC: Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Dear Chair Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell,

We, the undersigned organizations dedicated to protecting children, advancing privacy rights, and supporting parents and families, urge you to vote in favor of the Youth AI Privacy Act, S. 4199, when the Senate Commerce Committee considers it at markup this week. As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly embedded in young people's lives, Congress must establish clear safeguards for these products to ensure they cannot continue to be used to exploit children's attention, trust, and personal information.

The risks AI chatbots pose are urgent, and Congress should not wait to act. Eighty-six percent of children ages 9 to 17 have used artificial intelligence, including 67% who have used AI chatbots and nearly one-quarter who interact with AI every day.¹ Among children who use AI, 37% have used it to discuss their feelings or personal problems, and one-quarter of those children say AI sometimes understands them better than most people do.² One in five children who use AI — and 42% of daily users — say it would be difficult to stop using AI for a month.³ These findings show that AI chatbots are not merely tools for many children; AI chatbots are instead becoming constantly available, personalized confidants capable of collecting intimate information from and fostering emotional dependence with minors.

The Youth AI Privacy Act would be a significant step toward reducing these harms and would establish three especially important protections.

First, the bill would **limit manipulative design features that encourage compulsive use and emotional attachment**. It would limit how AI chatbots can use a minor's personal data to generate responses, preventing companies from building an open-ended memory of a child's past conversations, and it would bar profiling of minors outright. A chatbot should not be able to repeatedly draw upon a child's fears, insecurities, and private disclosures to deepen an artificial relationship and foster emotional dependence. The bill would also restrict rewards for continued

¹ Common Sense Media, *The Common Sense Media Census: AI Use by Tweens and Teens, 2026 5* (2026).

² *Id.* at 11.

³ *Id.* at 7.

use, push notifications, unsolicited messages, typing bubbles, and other features designed to keep children continuously engaged.

Second, the bill would **prohibit advertising and paid product promotion to minors through AI chatbots**. Kids are often unable to reliably distinguish advertising from authentic content, especially when disclosures are weak or absent.⁴ AI chatbots erase the last cues kids rely on to spot persuasion; without a formal shift or separate speaker to mark a sponsored answer from a factual one, LLMs flatten opinion, advertisement, and fact into a single stream, laundering commercial intent through the appearance of a neutral yet authoritative friend or confidant. Companies should not be permitted to exploit a child's trust in an AI chatbot to influence what that child wants or buys. Prohibiting the use of targeted advertising will also limit the business incentive to create addictive and emotionally manipulative chatbots in the first place.

Third, the bill would **prohibit companies from using or transferring minors' personal data to train underlying AI models**, while preserving the ability to use data when necessary to test for and address safety risks. Children should not have to surrender their intimate conversations, emotions, and vulnerabilities to improve a company's commercial product.

The Youth AI Privacy Act would establish targeted, commonsense rules that put children's privacy and well-being ahead of corporate profit incentives. Importantly, the bill also preserves states' ability to enact stronger protections for minors, ensuring that federal law serves as a floor—not a ceiling—for protecting young people from AI chatbot harms.

We appreciate the Committee's efforts to protect kids online and strongly urge you to vote in favor of the Youth AI Privacy Act.

Sincerely,

Center for Digital Democracy
Common Sense Media
Consumer Federation of America
Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)
Fairplay
ParentsSOS
Young People's Alliance
Public Citizen
The Tech Oversight Project
Parents Together Action
The Alliance for Secure AI
Paving the Way Foundation
InnovateEDU
Becca Schmill Foundation
Florida Citizens Alliance

⁴ Federal Trade Commission, *Staff Perspective: Protecting Kids from Stealth Advertising in Digital Media* (2023).