

An Open Letter to Congressional Leadership

On Children, Families, and Artificial Intelligence

September 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Majority Leader, United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader, United States Senate
U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Speaker, Leader Scalise, and Leader Thune:

We are parents, pastors, homeschool leaders, teachers, business owners, and civic leaders from communities across America. We write because our families and the ones we serve are asking a hopeful but urgent question: Will the country that invents the next great technology also be the country that protects its children while it does so?

We believe the answer can be yes, and we are writing to ask for your leadership in making it so.

Artificial intelligence holds remarkable promise. It will reshape medicine, education, defense, and work in ways that should make Americans proud, and we want our nation to lead in that race. But the first generation of consumer AI products designed for children and teens is following a familiar pattern: engagement prized over wellbeing, marketing aimed at minors who cannot weigh the consequences, and a posture toward parents of “trust us, we know best.”

We do not have to guess how this story ends. A New Mexico jury recently imposed roughly \$375 million in penalties on one of the nation’s largest technology companies for misleading consumers about documented dangers its platforms posed to children. More than 1,600 similar lawsuits are now pending. The same playbook - algorithmic capture of a child’s attention, monetization of that attention, denial of harm - is now being ported, with minimal modification, into AI companions, chatbots, and “friend” applications used by millions of American minors.

This is not a partisan concern. New polling from the Institute for Family Studies (May 2026, YouGov, N=1,000) finds that Americans support pre-deployment safety testing of AI by a margin of 20 to 1. Eighty-seven percent want AI evaluated for its effect on children and family wellbeing. Ninety percent of Trump voters and seventy-nine percent of Harris voters agree. Across red and blue states, across every generation, the country is asking the same thing: protect our kids.

So we come to you, respectfully, with three requests:

1. **Real age assurance, with risky features out by design.** Please ensure that AI products available to minors are subject to robust, verifiable age assurance, with high-risk features - companion simulation, sexualized chat, autonomous “relationship” dynamics - out by design for any user who is, or may be, a child. The burden of safety for children belongs to parents first, and the product owners, not to a twelve-year-old.
2. **Parental rights and meaningful transparency.** Please understand the need for strong and clear parental rights and disclosure standards. Parents must be able to see what their children are interacting with, what data is being collected, how the model is designed to behave, and what controls are available - and those controls must be real, not decorative. The parents, not the platform, are the first and proper responsibility and authority over a child’s formation, and companies should not step in between that relationship.
3. **No blanket immunity for predatory design.** Please do not grant AI developers federal immunity from accountability for harm caused by predatory design and implementation, and please do not preempt the state laws that families and legislatures of both parties are enacting to protect children. Instead, platform designers should be held to a “duty of care” standard that requires prioritization of child safety. A clear robust national framework is welcome; a free pass is not. By a 3-to-1 margin, Americans oppose such a moratorium. So do we.

We write as friends of this Congress and as friends of American innovation. The leaders who get this right will be remembered not as enemies of progress, but as the generation that ensured progress remained worthy of the children who inherit it. We are ready to stand with you, inform our neighbors, and celebrate the courage it will take to put children first.

With respect and hope,

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(Local leaders and parents from across the United States. Titles and affiliations listed for identification purposes only.)

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