

Background

App stores and developers often profit by keeping kids on their phones and addicted to their products, even if the app's content is harmful to minors. Whether it is sexually explicit material or social apps that expose children and teens to criminal actors, parents have little agency to protect their kids online. Existing parental controls are often ineffective, inaccessible, and easy to circumvent.

App Store Accountability Act

This bill imposes obligations for covered app stores—defined as providers for which users in the U.S. exceed 5,000,000—and app developers to ensure that children and teenagers are not exposed to harmful or inappropriate content. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires app stores to utilize privacy-protecting age verification methods, and link minor-owned accounts to a parental account to receive consent before downloading or purchasing apps
- Prohibits the retention, sharing, or selling of age category data for any reason
- Implements accurate and clear app age ratings
- Prohibits any act that would restrict the expression of political, religious, or other viewpoints
- Requires app stores to annually certify compliance with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

The bill empowers parents by creating a whistleblower mechanism allowing parents to submit complaints of non-compliance to the FTC.

Fast Facts

More than 100 child advocacy organizations sent a letter to Senator Lee and Congressman James urging swift action to pass the App Store Accountability Act. You can read it [here](#).

[A national poll](#) by the Digital Childhood Alliance found that 88% of parents want app stores to require parental approval before minors can download a new app. The concept is widely supported by Republicans, Democrats, and independents.

Utah passed a state-level version and numerous other states are advancing it including Texas, Alabama, Hawaii, Oregon, and several others.