

Dept. of Justice: AG Kaul joins bipartisan coalition in support of congressional hearings addressing youth social media use

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Coalition Sends Joint Letter to U.S. Senate Committee Sharing Concerns about Social Media Platforms Exploiting Young People for Profit
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MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul joined a bipartisan coalition of 52 attorneys general expressing strong support for the hearings being conducted by the U.S. Senate Committee addressing protection and safety of kids and teens using social media. Attorneys general have been watchful and concerned over the impacts of social media on youth. Those concerns have grown with the recent research from Facebook’s own internal studies showing that social media is inflicting harm—in the form of increased mental distress, bullying, suicide, and other self-harm—on a significant number of kids. “It’s unacceptable for social media companies to profit by addicting kids to their screens, especially when those companies are aware of the harms that can result from that addiction,” said Attorney General Kaul. “Thank you to the U.S. Senate for holding hearings on this issue that impacts families across the country.”

The [letter](#) recognizes the hearings will uncover critical information about the business practices that social media companies are using to gain the attention of more young people on their platforms. Attorneys general believe the current and future well-being of our nation’s youth is at stake.

In May 2021, a bipartisan coalition of 44 attorneys general wrote a [letter](#) to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg urging the company to abandon its plans to launch a version of Instagram for children under the age of 13. That request was ignored. Last week, in advance of the Congressional hearings, Facebook announced their intent to “pause” the project, however the attorneys general believe the project should be abandoned altogether.

The attorneys general write that “More engagement by the user equals more data to leverage for advertising, which equals greater profit. This prompts social media companies to design their algorithms and other features to psychologically manipulate young users into a state of addiction to their cell phone screens.”