

Rodriguez campaign: Releases plan to “Keep Wisconsin Kids Safe Online” and hold Big Tech accountable

Posted on Wednesday, Feb 25, 2026

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

CONTACT: press@saraforwi.com

Rodriguez praised actions to ban phones in schools but says Wisconsin must go further to hold Big Tech and social media companies accountable

MADISON, WI — Lt. Governor Sara Rodriguez – a nurse, working mom and Democratic candidate for governor – today released her plan to protect Wisconsin kids from predatory tech companies and hold Big Tech accountable for harm caused to children.

“As a mom, I see what’s happening. Our kids are growing up online and being harmed in a multitude of ways, and these tech companies know exactly what they’re doing,” said Lt. Gov. Rodriguez. **“They design these platforms to be addictive: the endless scroll, the notifications that won’t stop, the algorithms that keep pushing content to keep kids hooked. And when it damages their mental health or pushes dangerous content, they don’t care. As long as kids keep scrolling, they keep making money. Wisconsin parents and kids need someone who will put a stop to this.”**

Rodriguez acknowledged legislation passed by the Wisconsin Assembly that addresses school cell phone use, age verification for apps, and social media platform requirements for minors. She strongly supports Wisconsin’s school cell phone ban, which helps parents by creating phone-free learning environments and

reducing pressure on kids to be constantly connected to their devices. But the other bills put the burden on parents to verify their identity with biometric data or government IDs just to protect their own kids. She said Wisconsin must do more to hold Big Tech accountable for the damage these platforms cause instead of placing the responsibility on parents.

“Parents are trying everything from limiting screen time, checking their kids’ phones, having hard conversations about what they’re seeing online. But we’re up against billion-dollar companies that have hired teams of engineers and psychologists to make platforms as addictive as possible,” Rodriguez said. **“My plan puts the responsibility where it belongs - on Big Tech, not on parents who are already doing everything they can.”**

Rodriguez’s plan closes loopholes and creates real accountability for Big Tech. It would allow parents to sue social media companies when platforms lead to addiction and promote damaging content to children; bans addictive design features like infinite scroll, autoplay, and manipulative notifications from being accessed by kids — applying to all platforms regardless of size; prohibits all forms of surveillance advertising to anyone under 18, including ads based on kids’ personal data, browsing history, political views, religious beliefs, or algorithmic profiling; requires platforms to disclose how their algorithms work, what content they’re promoting to children, and what data is being collected, with independent audits to verify compliance; strengthens criminal penalties for online predators and holds tech companies accountable when their products sexualize kids, including creating nonconsensual sexual imagery of kids or engaging in sexual roleplay conversations with minors; and creates a state Office of Digital Safety and Technology Policy to coordinate enforcement and ensure Wisconsin leads on protecting kids online.

“Tech CEOs have spent millions lobbying Washington to make sure nobody touches their business model, even when it’s hurting our kids,” Rodriguez said. **“Wisconsin parents and kids deserve leaders who will actually fight for them. Not politicians who take Big Tech’s money and look the other way.”**

Keep Wisconsin Kids Safe Online

Hold Big Tech Companies and Tech CEOs Accountable for Harm

- Allow parents to sue social media companies when platforms lead to addiction and promote damaging content to children – including content related to eating disorders, substance abuse, self-harm, or exploitation
- Hold tech companies accountable when social media companies and AI chatbots cause harm to kids.
- Wisconsin families fought to protect kids against Big Tobacco, and won. Now it's time to fight to protect our kids from Big Tech.

Support Cell Phone-Free Schools

- Support and strengthen legislative efforts to ban cell phones during the entire school day in Wisconsin schools.
- Phone-free schools help kids focus on learning, reduce cyberbullying during school hours, and take pressure off parents by creating environments where kids aren't constantly connected to their devices.
- This complements platform accountability by addressing both the technology and the environment where kids use it.

Ban Addictive Design Features for Kids

- Prohibit online platforms from deploying addictive features designed to maximize screen time and cause addiction for users under the age of 18 – including infinite scroll, autoplay, and manipulative notifications – applying to all platforms regardless of size.
- Kids' brains are still developing, making them more vulnerable to addiction by design – tech companies know this and exploit their vulnerability by hiring psychologists and brain scientists to manipulate them into compulsively using their platforms.
- Recent legislation requires some large platforms to turn off these features for kids – Sara's plan bans them from being accessed by kids in the first place.
- Unlike the Assembly bills, Sara's plan puts the responsibility on tech companies to prevent kids from accessing addictive features – not on parents.

Ban Surveillance Advertising to Children

- Prohibit all forms of surveillance advertising to anyone under the age of 18, including ads based on kids' personal data, browsing history, political views, religious beliefs, or algorithmic profiling.
- Tech companies shouldn't be spying on kids across the internet to sell their

data to advertisers or manipulate their behavior.

- Platforms must verify age without requiring invasive data collection from parents.

Strengthen Protections Against Online Predators

- Support stronger criminal penalties for online child exploitation, grooming, and sextortion.
- Require platforms to implement proactive detection and reporting systems to identify and remove predatory behavior.
- Ensure law enforcement has the training and resources to investigate online crimes against children.
- Hold tech companies accountable when their products sexualize kids, including creating nonconsensual sexual imagery of kids and by engaging in sexual roleplay conversations with minors.

Require Transparency and Independent Audits

- Require social media platforms to disclose how their algorithms work, what content is being promoted to children, and what data is being collected.
- Independent audits will verify compliance with safety standards and identify harm.
- Parents and policymakers deserve to know what these platforms are doing to our kids and whether they are keeping our kids safe.

Create an Office of Digital and Technology Policy

- Establish an executive branch office to coordinate across state agencies and strengthen protections for kids online, modernize technological governance, and lead state efforts in online safety, artificial intelligence oversight, cybersecurity, and emerging technology policy.
- This office will modernize our approach to digital governance, ensuring strong consumer protections, safeguarding kids and families, and strengthening Wisconsin's commitment to innovation, economic growth, and responsible leadership in emerging industries.