AGE VERIFICATION MANDATES: MYTHS VS. FACTS ON PRIVACY & DIGITAL SECURITY

TAXPAYERS PROTECTION ALLIANCE

Age verification mandates are increasingly promoted as a simple solution for protecting minors online. However, these proposals raise significant concerns about privacy, cybersecurity, and free expression, particularly when they require Americans to submit sensitive identification to access lawful content on the internet. Here are some of the most common myths—and the facts behind them:

MYTH: AGE VERIFICATION IS NOT A RISK TO CONSUMER PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

FACT: Massive data breaches tied to ID verification tools are already exposing Social Security numbers, IDs, addresses, and photos—impacting millions. Incidents include a contractor breach exposing more than 25 million SSNs, ID verification apps leaking personal data, a hacked Discord verification vendor, and 72,000 images scraped from a dating "safety" app. More here.

MYTH: AGE VERIFICATION TECHNOLOGIES ARE ACCURATE AND RELIABLE

FACT: Computer scientists warn that internet age-verification mandates risk censorship, centralized control, and privacy loss. More here.

MYTH: AGE VERIFICATION DOESN'T RAISE CONSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS

FACT: Courts have repeatedly made clear that broad age verification mandates raise serious constitutional concerns. Laws that force users to identify themselves before accessing lawful content must be narrowly tailored to serve a compelling interest. Requiring identification to access online speech undermines longstanding First Amendment protections, including the right to speak and read anonymously.

MYTH: AGE VERIFICATION WON'T REQUIRE GOVERNMENT-ISSUED ID OR FACIAL SCANS

FACT: Highly specific age categories, combined with the risk of legal liability for misidentifying users, push platforms toward the most defensible verification method available. In practice, that means relying on government-issued identification or facial scans. As a result, many services would likely require users to submit official IDs or facial scans to access lawful online content.