TAXPAYERS PROTECTION ALLIANCE

November 12, 2026

2026 Special Committee on Protecting Children from Online Harm
Kansas Legislature
300 SW 10th Ave
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairwoman Humphries, Vice Chairwoman Warren and Members of the Committee:

The Taxpayers Protection Alliance (TPA), a nonprofit, nonpartisan taxpayer and consumer watchdog, appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the impact of online platforms on Kansas's youth, particularly as it relates to online harm.

Parents should remain the primary decision-makers about their children's use of technology. Policymakers should encourage practical tools that allow families to establish appropriate limits and supervise online activity, rather than imposing one-size-fits-all restrictions that coopt the role of parents and may not reflect the needs of individual children and households. Government policies should support parental involvement and digital education while preserving families' flexibility to determine what works best for them. As is the case offline, parents play an essential role in determining how their children interact with online platforms. Tools that help parents manage screen time and establish appropriate boundaries can support families without requiring every user to surrender sensitive personal information. It should be noted that many of these tools are available, but their availability and how to use them is not always known by parents. To parent their children effectively in a digital age, they must understand how to deploy these powerful tools to full effect.

Concerns about excessive screen time deserve thoughtful consideration. However, screen time alone does not necessarily distinguish between productive, healthy technology uses and unhealthy uses. A student using an online platform to complete schoolwork or develop a new skill is engaging with technology differently from a young person spending many hours per day consuming content to the exclusion of other priorities. Everything is best in moderation. As technology continues to evolve, digital literacy is increasingly important. Students should learn how to use digital platforms in a manner conducive to robust mental health, to evaluate online information and identify misleading content, to recognize scams, and to protect their personal information. Policymakers should prioritize education and responsible technology use. In addition to parents, schools and educators are well positioned to help children develop healthy digital habits while ensuring they can benefit from the educational opportunities technology provides.

Protecting children online is a necessity. However, policymakers must carefully consider the unintended consequences of government intervention in the digital environment. Efforts to promote online safety should empower parents and educators without compromising privacy, limiting access to information for adults, or falling afoul of the First Amendment. Policies should not impose broad, one-size-fits-all mandates that may be difficult to implement without compromising the privacy of adults and minors alike. Parental empowerment, and not the imposition of a single standard by legislators, should be the goal.

As this Committee considers the relationship between online platforms, digital literacy, and online harm, TPA encourages lawmakers to prioritize a practical and flexible approach that puts families first.

Sincerely,



David Williams
President