

February 6, 2026

The Honorable Henry McMaster  
State House  
1100 Gervais Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Governor McMaster:

We write to you as parent advocates because we are thrilled with the passage of the South Carolina Age-Appropriate Design Code as part of H.3431, South Carolina Social Media Regulation Act, and respectfully urge you to protect our kids online by signing this important bill into law.

South Carolina families are in crisis. We're fighting every day to protect our kids from an online world that wasn't designed with their best interests in mind, and instead only considers big tech profits and bottom lines. These design choices online pose real dangers and life-threatening consequences for kids offline. Teens who spend five or more hours a day on social media are 71% more likely to have one or more risk factors for suicide than those who spend less than an hour a day. That's a terrifying number when you consider that 81% of 14 to 22 year-olds said they use social media either "daily" or "almost constantly."

In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an extremely rare health advisory on the risks of social media usage to youth mental health, citing concerns over sleep deprivation, depression, and anxiety. 46% of teenagers say they lose sleep daily due to feeling "stuck" on social media platforms. And 50% of parents of children feel their children's mental health has suffered over the last year due to social media.

Social media companies are profiting off the time, attention, and data of young people – creating a vicious cycle of exploitation and harm. Online platforms purposely design their products to keep kids on screens, track kids' activity, and then monetize the data they collect to increase profits – no matter the cost to South Carolina kids and families.

The South Carolina Age-Appropriate Design Code would improve young people's digital experiences by requiring digital products including social media platforms and A.I. chatbots to implement privacy-by-default and safety-by-design protections for kids online. This means setting high privacy standards by default and avoiding manipulative design.

This commonsense, bipartisan legislation would institute key data privacy protections and require tech companies to redesign their products without the exploitative features that trap our youth.

We hope we can count on you to support the South Carolina Age-Appropriate Design Code and finally give kids, parents, and families the tools and basic protections they need to stay safe online.

Sincerely,

**MAMA - Mothers Against Media Addiction**

**The National Center on Sexual Exploitation**

**Palmetto State Teachers Association**

**Design It For Us**

**SAVE - Suicide Awareness Voices of Education**

**The Tech Oversight Project**

**Less Than 3**

**ScreenStrong**