

# Kids Online Safety Act S.3663

Sponsors: Chair Blumenthal (D-CT) and Ranking Member Blackburn (R-TN)

**The Problem:** Social media algorithms knowingly promote harmful mental health content to youth in return for boosted engagement and profits

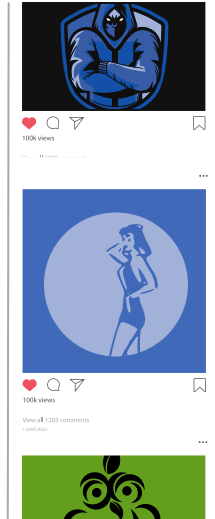
Social media platform algorithms place

extreme pro-eating disorder, suicide, & depression content

next to

youth-targeted advertising

and serve this content to youth to maximize engagement & spending<sup>1</sup>



Pro-eating disorders content on Instagram: <sup>2</sup>



**900,000 pro-ED content creators** reaching **20 million followers**



**33% of pro-ED content creators are minors** collectively reaching **500,000+ followers**



Instagram profits **more than \$230M/year** from pro-ED content

including **more than \$62.5M/year** from **underage pro-ED content**

**The Impact:** Rise in youth eating disorders fueled by the pandemic



Pandemic isolation has led to **increased social media usage** and an amplified focus on the **"COVID-15" and dieting**<sup>5</sup>

**Doubled**

**emergency room eating disorders visits for teen girls**<sup>3</sup>

**Doubled**

**eating disorder caseloads at children's hospitals**<sup>4</sup>

**The Solution:** Through existing FTC authority,



**Youth and parental controls**



**Independent scientist access to platform data for public interest research on impacts to youth**



**Duty of care to protect minors**

including from mental health harms, sex trafficking, and illegal products

- ✓ Independent external audits to assess compliance and risk
- ✓ Guidance and counsel provided by Kids Online Safety Council
- ✓ Enforced via FTC's *Unfair and Deceptive Practices Act* authority

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## Sources

1 Byrne 2021; Zhang et al 2021; Frison & Eggermont 2017; Fardouly & Vartanian 2015

2 Fairplay 2022. [designing\\_for\\_disorder.pdf](https://www.fairplayforkids.org/designing_for_disorder.pdf) (fairplayforkids.org).

3 Leeb et al 2020. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6945a3external>

4 Lin et al 2021; Otto et al 2021

5 Haripersad et al 2021; Solmi et al 2021; Branley-Bell & Talbot 2020; Castellini et al 2020; Graell et al 2020; Phillipou et al 2020; Scharmer et al 2020; Termorshuizen et al 2020