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.

Pro-eating disorders content on Instagram:
- 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.

Doubled emergency room eating disorders visits for teen girls
Doubled eating disorder caseloads at children's hospitals

The Solution: Through existing FTC authority,

- 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
- Youth and parental controls
  - Independent scientist access to platform data for public interest research on impacts to youth

Interested in cosponsoring? Senate: email Colin.Anderson@blumenthal.senate.gov or Jamie.Susskind@blackburn.senate.gov
House: email Michele.Viterisi@mail.house.gov (Rep. Pallone) or Tim.Kurth@mail.house.gov (Rep. McMorris Rodgers)
Kids Online Safety Act S.3663
Sponsors: Chair Blumenthal (D-CT) and Ranking Member Blackburn (R-TN)

Sources

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