

Dear Members of the Committee:

I write to express my support for Senate Bill 180, which would require app stores to secure parental consent and verify a user's age before a child can download a single app on their device.

This is a common-sense approach to protecting kids. We don't need the government to police the internet, we just need the government to ensure that parents have the tools they need to protect their own children's online experience.

By placing the responsibility for age verification and parental approval at the app store level - rather than a wide variety of apps with varying degrees of privacy protection - this bill creates a consistent, privacy-conscious solution. It ensures apps a child may download are subject to parental oversight, offering greater control for parents in their digital exposure.

As an aunt, I have seen firsthand how quickly kids can access inappropriate content. My young niece downloaded an app that ended up exposing her to messages from strangers. Fortunately, the situation was resolved but it opened our eyes to the potential for children to stumble into unsafe online spaces. Parents and guardians can do their best, but without proper safeguards, parent's jobs are more difficult. Senate Bill 180 would help families like mine ensure kids aren't accessing apps without a trusted adult's approval.

I urge you to VOTE YES on Senate Bill 180. This is an important step toward protecting children online, and I believe South Dakota has an opportunity to set a precedent for the rest of the nation.

Thank you,

Racheal Schmitt