

rare ability to navigate complexity while keeping the public interest at the forefront.

Mr. Cotton later served as New York State's Special Counselor to the Governor for Interagency Initiatives, where he helped advance some of the state's most transformative infrastructure projects. These efforts included the redevelopment of LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy Airports, Moynihan Train Hall and the Penn Farley Complex, the new Tappan Zee Bridge, the expansion of the Javits Center, and the Second Avenue Subway. These projects not only modernized critical assets, but reshaped how New Yorkers move, work, and connect across the region.

In 2017, Mr. Cotton was appointed Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Under his leadership, the agency confronted some of the region's most complex infrastructure challenges and undertook one of the most ambitious capital programs in its history. This included a \$30 billion transformation of the region's major airports and the full reconstruction of the Midtown Bus Terminal, laying the foundation for world class transportation facilities built for the 21st Century.

More than the projects completed or milestones reached, Mr. Rick Cotton's legacy is reflected in the people he supported, the teams he strengthened, and the standard of professionalism he brought to work. His tenure will be remembered for its scale, its vision, and its lasting impact on generations to come.

TRUE COST OF BIG TECH

HON. JIMMY PATRONIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Mr. PATRONIS. Mr. Speaker, Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act insulates "Big Tech" from most liability for the digital fentanyl promoted on their sites. Time and time again, drugs are sold, sexually suggestive and/or explicit content is posted without consent, algorithms promote and normalize suicide and self-harm, and chatbots tell children how to cope with their emotions. All of these things are harming our vulnerable and impressionable youth. Chatbot usage is now so widespread that nearly three quarters of teens have used AI companions, and of these users approximately one in three have used them for social interactions and relationships to include the more than one in ten who sought emotional or mental health support.

That is why I proudly introduced H.R. 7045, the Promoting Responsible Online Technology and Ensuring Consumer Trust (PROTECT) Act, to immediately repeal Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act and to restore accountability for online platforms.

The question we must ask ourselves is: can there be any accountability when there is no liability. The answer is no. Without liability there is no accountability. When was the last time you saw revenge porn or fentanyl marketed on a billboard? The answer is you have not seen it because of a well-crafted system that punishes wrongdoing. Why do we see this content online constantly? The answer is Section 230.

Let us stop pretending like the internet is new, novel, and worthy of special treatment

when 96 percent Americans access it. When the law passed in 1996, the internet was in its early days long before the average American spent nearly half the month online and nearly one in six sales occurred online. Congress can no longer ignore the fact that the average American spends nearly 60,000 percent more time online than during the year of the law's passage.

To be clear, this law lets the large companies that dominate the areas where Americans spend almost half their time generally face no consequences for the content these platforms share, actively promote, and generate billions from. Worse yet, the law also deprives states of the power to protect their own citizens through state law. I am deeply troubled by alarming national trends and the proliferation of AI chatbots, providing advice to our children. Increasingly, children have been suffering, and parents have been unable to pursue an effective means of encouraging the industry to police itself.

Sadly, one in five children receive an unwanted sexual solicitation annually online. Despite Section 230 continuing to insulate online predation, I am proud of the work multiple sheriff offices, as well as state and federal agencies did to arrest 13 suspects during an online child sexual predator operation in my district and in surrounding communities last fall.

Imagine how much more "Big Tech" would be willing to do to shut down the predator superhighway if they faced actual consequences. While I could fill hundreds of pages with stories about how social media is harming our youth and supplement it daily, I want to focus on stories from my district and my home state of Florida.

As a successful Section 230 defense often results in the court granting dismissal early in the litigation, the facts are often accepted as plead. In these instances, the excerpts below reflect the claims as plead by the victims and their families.

ONLY FANS PARENT COMPANY FACES NO LIABILITY FOR ALLEGEDLY PROFITING OFF RAPE OF A MIAMI TEENAGER

In April 2022, Michelson Romelus and Bendjy Charles allegedly filmed each other on video while they forcible raped and sodomized the teenage victim in Miami. Several weeks later, the footage was allegedly edited and uploaded to OnlyFans.com where the footage was allegedly sold as part of a monthly subscription. Despite these facts, the case was recommended for dismissal based on Section 230, meaning the alleged victim could not recover from the platform.

OMEGLE IMMUNE FROM LIABILITY FOR ALLEGEDLY CONNECTING A MINOR WITH A PREDATOR WHO COERCED AN 11-YEAR-OLD INTO UNDRRESSING

On March 31, 2020, an 11-year-old girl and user of the Omegle platform, which allowed users to connect with people randomly and anonymously allegedly connected the child with a predator. This predator allegedly informed the victim that he knew where she lived and provided specific details about where she lived to prove it. He allegedly threatened to hack the victim and her family's devices if she did not disrobe and comply with his demands. The predator allegedly filmed the incident. The case was dismissed by the Court as the victim's family "failed to plead claims that withstand Omegle's Section 230 immunity." The platform has since ceased operations.

OFFERUP FOUND NOT LIABLE FOR ALLEGEDLY CONNECTING BUYER WITH SELLER WHO ROBBED AND SHOT BUYER

On June 13, 2018, the victim allegedly arranged to meet with the seller in Palmetto, Florida to consummate the contemplated sale of goods. The meeting was allegedly setup in response to a post on the OfferUp platform. When the victim arrived, he was allegedly robbed and shot multiple times. The Court concluded that Section 230 barred the claim against OfferUp.

CRAIGSLIST FACES NO ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALLEGEDLY FACILITATING SEX TRAFFICKING OF A 15-YEAR-OLD

Back in 2008, a then fifteen-year-old girl began to allegedly be forcibly trafficked for commercial sex, which allegedly continued for a decade across Miami-Dade County. She was allegedly frequently expected to perform commercial sexual acts for between eleven and fourteen different men daily. The traffickers allegedly used craigslist's "erotic services", "adult services", "massage services", "casual encounters", and "personals" categories to display their posts and to send emails on the platform to negotiate commercial sex sales. Her traffickers allegedly posted sexually explicit, nude and partially nude photos as well as coded words to advertise commercial sex. At times, messages allegedly sent on the platform indicated that the victim was underage. To use their platform, the traffickers allegedly paid a fee to craigslist who never rejected or removed any posts.

Although the Court explained that "some of her allegations demonstrate craigslist's appalling lack of diligence in preventing trafficking, not a single one establishes that craigslist created or developed the trafficking content." After an extensive legal battle, the Court ultimately found craigslist not liable based on a Section 230 defense.

MOTHER WHOSE 11-YEAR-OLD SON WAS AN ALLEGED VICTIM OF SEXUAL BATTERY DENIED RELIEF AFTER A FOUR-YEAR FIGHT

Following an alleged sexual assault of legal guardian's 11-year-old son and two other minor males in 1994, Richard Lee Russell was criminally convicted for events relating to those alleged in the complaint. This sexual predator under Florida Law allegedly solicited the sale of the photographs and video of this assault in America Online, Inc., chat rooms. Ultimately, this case was appealed all the way to the Florida Supreme Court. The mother was denied civil relief from America Online, Inc., after the Court found Section 230 preempted Florida law.

EMERGING THREAT OF AI CHATBOTS

Beyond platforms serving as a predator superhighway, today's parents must contend with AI chatbots that are grooming children and pretending to be licensed therapists. For example, a 14-year-old boy, after allegedly prolonged conversations with an AI chatbot, tragically ended his life near Orlando, Florida. His brave mother recently testified in the Senate Judiciary Committee that the company Character Technologies, Inc., would not disclose to her many of her child's last words. Imagine a parent not being allowed to know what was going on through her child's mind in his final minutes.

For all these reasons, Congress must swiftly pass the PROTECT Act to keep our children safe and to restore accountability to the internet.

RECOGNIZING RANDY MOJE

HON. NICHOLAS A. LANGWORTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary dedication and service of Randy Moje, who has devoted 50 years to serving the Town of Pendleton and the Wendelville Volunteer Fire Company. A second-generation firefighter, Randy has held numerous leadership positions, including Chief, and has consistently demonstrated commitment to public safety and the growth of the Wendelville Volunteer Fire Company.

Randy has been a leader in Fire Prevention, spending many hours with the Fire Prevention trailer educating the community, and has been an essential contributor to fundraising events such as chowder-making, lobster dinners, and the Farmers Breakfast. His dedication extends to supporting both the operational and social functions that sustain the Wendelville Volunteer Fire Company.

Randy's experience, leadership, and willingness to serve in any capacity have inspired generations of firefighters and strengthened the company's presence in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the United States House of Representatives join me in honoring Randy Moje for his remarkable 50 years of service and in wishing him continued success and fulfillment in his ongoing commitment to the community.

CELEBRATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEN RIVER HILL GROCERY

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Green River Hill Grocery, located in Munfordville, Kentucky.

Since 1951, Green River Hill Grocery has been a cornerstone of the local community, serving generations of Hart County families. Operating just a few miles from Mammoth Cave National Park and Abraham Lincoln's Birthplace National Historical Park, the store has been a welcome stop for visitors exploring the rich history of our region. In 2024, Tony and Rachelle Wright proudly assumed ownership of this landmark, continuing the Green River Hill Grocery's long-standing tradition of fostering friendships over delicious home-cooked meals. This milestone would not be possible without the overwhelming support of Hart County and all those who have supported the store.

Green River Hill Grocery will continue to serve as more than just a store, but as a pillar of the Hart County community. By blending the passion for food, agriculture, and community, the team plans on continuing to honor the store's rich history and guarantee its place in the region for years to come. For 75 years, Green River Hill Grocery has played an essential role in Hart County and the communities along the Green River. I commend the

Wright family for their commitment to enriching our community and congratulate all of Hart County on this remarkable milestone.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RANDY FEENSTRA

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Mr. FEENSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present for the following votes. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 49, and YEA on Roll Call No. 50.

RECOGNIZING MR. JACOB LEWIS

HON. GREGORY F. MURPHY

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the remarkable accomplishment of an outstanding young man from my district, Mr. Jacob Lewis, who, after many years of perseverance, will receive his Eagle Scout on February 7, 2026.

Jacob began his scouting journey in the first grade and has risen all the way to the highest rank Eagle Scout, showing his determination to achievement and dedication to the principles of Scouting which include Duty to God, Duty to Others and Duty to Self. Through his experience, he has taken on multiple leadership roles, such as Patrol Leader, where he ran troop meetings, planned activities, and represented the troop. This role required Jacob to utilize the leadership, communication, and organization skills that scouting helps instill in our next generation of young men. Jacob set the example for what a scout should be all the way to his Eagle Scout.

A key requirement Jacob had to fulfill to receive the Eagle Scout rank is to complete a self-directed and self-planned service project. These projects provide an opportunity to demonstrate leadership while benefiting the community. Jacob's service project was designing and building a donation box for his local humane society, to ensure they were able to collect donations in an organized manner. He coordinated with the society to ensure that the donations were picked up on a weekly basis. He went above and beyond to ensure his design was weather-protected and provided information to donors. This project highlights Jacob's caring nature and the values instilled in him through his scouting experience.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Jacob for his outstanding accomplishment. He has shown the attributes that will serve him well as a dedicated citizen and servant leader. He is to be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DAN WALKER

HON. TED LIEU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Mr. LIEU. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of former Torrance Mayor Dan

Walker, a devoted public servant and veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve. His decades of public service have left a profound and lasting impact on the City of Torrance and the greater South Bay community. He passed away on December 6, 2025, at the age of 85.

Born in 1940, in the City of Long Beach, Dan grew up in area attending school and eventually attending and graduating from Long Beach City College and California State University, Long Beach. He served for a time as lifeguard to help pay for his college education. After college, Dan joined the United States Coast Guard Reserve and later worked for an advertising company in San Francisco. While working for this advertising company, Dan had several clients including the City of Torrance, which he visited on several occasions and grew fond of.

Dan moved to Torrance in 1970, becoming involved with the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce shortly thereafter. Because of his dedication to the community of Torrance, he was appointed as a planning commissioner for the city in 1975. A couple of years later, Dan was elected to serve as a Torrance City Councilmember serving on council for a record twenty-six years. This service would culminate in his election as Torrance's Mayor in 2002. During his tenure, Torrance remained one of the safest cities in Los Angeles County while maintaining fiscal stability and a strong business environment. His leadership helped revitalize key areas of the city, including the Del Amo Fashion Center and the Torrance Towne Center.

Mayor Walker was a strong advocate for accessible public spaces. He played a vital role in the development of Discovery Park in Torrance, and he established the West Coast's first universally accessible treehouse in Charles H. Wilson Park. In addition, Walker also supported the creation of the George Nakano Theatre and the Torrance Art Museum. Alongside these regional roles, he chaired the Ad Hoc Economic Development Partnership and spent 15 years as a dedicated member of the Friends of Child Advocates Board of Directors.

Dan's influence extended well beyond the borders of Torrance. In 1987, he was appointed by then Governor George Deukmejian to the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board and represented Torrance with regional agencies, including the Southern California Association of Governments and the South Bay Cities Council of Governments.

Dan Walker's service will continue to have a lasting impact on the City of Torrance and the South Bay region. His commitment to public service, thoughtful leadership, and focus on long-term community improvement helped shape Torrance's growth over his years of service. Mayor Walker earned the trust and respect of his residents through his dedication and steady leadership. He is survived by his wife, Mary Ann, his stepson, Gary Lorge, daughter in law, Kathy Lorge, and stepdaughter, Kathy Hicks. May his memory live on through the many lives he touched in his work and service to our community.