

President Bush signed 20 years ago this very month. That law did several things. This, by the way, was a cooperation between this Senator from Iowa and then-Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts.

First, the legislation, the Family Opportunity Act, enabled middle-income families who have kids with disabilities to buy into Medicaid. It has helped families get the healthcare they need for their kids with disabilities without going into poverty. It was a pro-work, pro-family, and pro-taxpayer piece of legislation.

More recently in 2019, Congress passed my Advancing Care for Exceptional Kids law, or a law that goes by the short term of ACE Kids. ACE Kids better aligns Medicaid rules and payment to incentivize coordination of care. It does this by establishing a pediatric health home for kids with complex medical conditions.

Kids with complex medical conditions often see multiple doctors and dozens of healthcare professionals. You can see, that is a lot of care coordination that often doesn't happen, or it is left to the parents to figure out. ACE Kids fixes this and ensures care coordination happening.

While I am sure more work will need to be done, I want to recognize the hard work that went into the passage of the Accelerating Kids' Access to Care law and the importance of it—its bipartisanship, its backing by a couple hundred organizations that advocate for kids with special needs. Yet it is another step towards supporting the dignity of exceptional kids.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Indiana.

(The remarks of Mr. BANKS pertaining to the introduction of S. 3917 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BANKS. I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:24 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BANKS).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON DELEEUW NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the DeLeeuw nomination?

Mr. TILLIS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 41 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Murkowski
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Sheehy
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Young
Ernst	Moody	

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Reed
Baldwin	Hirono	Rosen
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schiff
Booker	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Coons	Lujan	Slotkin
Cortez Masto	Markey	Smith
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warner
Fetterman	Murray	Warnock
Gallego	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Welch
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Fischer	Paul	Wicker
Hassan	Whitehouse	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Tennessee.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Executive Calendar No. 651, Ryan McCormack.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ryan McCormack, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

KIDS ONLINE SAFETY ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, new court documents that were made public last week revealed that nearly one in five—one in five—young teenagers have reported seeing "nudity and sexual images on Instagram" that they did not want to see. That is one in five—things that were just fed to them. They were not aware they were going

to see this pop up on their screen. That is what was reported. These are the kids that said: Hey, this is what has happened on my Instagram screen.

That is just one shocking fact that we have learned from a landmark trial that is taking place in California that is focused on how social media platforms are harming our Nation's children.

It is appalling what these companies have done. Yet when he testified last week, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg actually doubled down on his record of denial. While sitting just feet away from parents who have tragically lost their children due to social media harms, he said: We didn't do this—nothing to see.

And, once again, he asserted that there is no link between youth, social media use, and, worse, mental health outcomes.

But we know that this is not what the facts and the data and the research tell us. We also know it is not what parents and principals and teachers and pastors and pediatricians and psychologists are telling us. We also know it is not what the kids are telling us.

We know that Meta has buried their child safety research because it didn't fit their narrative. They didn't like the results. They did not want to admit that the product that they are pushing is something that is harming kids. We learned that last year. We learned from brave whistleblowers who testified before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law that Meta knows what is going on, but they tried to hide it.

The whistleblowers have alleged that there is a toxic culture at Meta, starting at the top with Zuckerberg and the C-suite, and that they have encouraged a coverup and a denial of what their own research is telling them.

Years ago, internal reports showed that Meta downplayed the toxic impact of Instagram on teenage girls. To no one's surprise, Zuckerberg dodged questions last week about how Instagram can worsen anxiety, depression, body image issues, and eating disorder risks.

He claims that their platform does not allow people under the age of 13 to be on the platform. Yet internal Meta documents—their own documents—show that the company was building "social products"—using their term—"social products" that are targeting children as young as 6 years old. Let's start this addiction early.

Now, Meta promises that their Instagram "Teen Accounts" are going to protect kids online. Yet reports show that only 17 percent of their safety features work as advertised. You know, that is a failing rate, and Big Tech companies have proven that you cannot trust them to police themselves. They cannot be trusted to tell the truth about the way their products are affecting young users.

Well, what we have seen is that parents are indeed outraged. And they have the right to be outraged. These

are their kids, and this is a product that is addicting their kids, and the company does nothing about it.

Research and a poll that we saw last week said 86 percent of Americans—86, a pretty good majority there—now say that they want tech companies to be held accountable for their role in the social media addiction crisis, and Congress should listen to them.

Last year, Senator BLUMENTHAL and I reintroduced the Kids Online Safety Act. That legislation passed the Senate on a 91-to-3 vote. It has a veto-proof majority of 75 Senate cosponsors. I thank each of my colleagues who have cosponsored this bill. This legislation would place a duty of care on social media companies to ensure their platforms are safe for children—a duty of care, safety design, safety as the default.

Now, I think it is important to note that every industrial sector has safety standards and safety-by-design requirements. Whether you are buying a car or a toaster or a mattress or a curling iron, safety standards have to be met. The only industrial sector without safety product design is the virtual space—these AI companies and social media platforms.

We are finally seeing momentum that is saying: Let's pass some restrictions. Let's get the Kids Online Safety Act to the President's desk.

Last week, Vice President VANCE called KOSA a "great piece of legislation about child safety online."

There is a reason Big Tech has fought us over the last 5 years, trying to keep this bill from passing. It is because they put profit over our children's safety. When a child is online, they are the product. The longer they are online, the richer their data. The more eyeballs they collect to a platform, the longer those eyeballs stay on that platform, and the data is richer.

And what do they do with that data? They sell it. They sell your child's data. They don't want to change their business model.

So last year, Meta spent roughly \$20 million fighting the Kids Online Safety Act—greed, selfish.

They hired—get this—one lobbyist for every six Members of Congress. That is the extent they will go to to make certain they keep their business model and they keep your kid scrolling on their site. They have even gone so far as to assign a dollar value to each kid who is on their platforms.

SOCIAL MEDIA BIAS

Mr. President, more than 150 million Americans have an iPhone, and each of those phones is preloaded with Apple News. But according to some shocking new reports, Apple has suppressed conservative, center-right publications while boosting left-leaning outlets, turning their app into a tool of political propaganda for the left.

The Media Research Center—that is a watchdog group—analyzed every story featured by the app during the mornings of January 1 to January 31. Mr.

President, 620 top stories were featured, and 440 of those stories were published by left-leaning outlets. The remainder? They came from centrist or unaffiliated sources. But there were zero—not one, nada, none—zero that came from center-right and right-leaning outlets. Zero. Nothing from conservatives. Zero.

A separate study analyzed stories featured on Apple News over a 2-week span in October and, once again, guess what. There were zero articles from right-leaning publications, and 54 percent came from left-leaning sources.

We have seen this playbook before. For more than a decade, social media platforms have suppressed and censored conservative speech. If you criticized Democrats' COVID lockdowns, they took down your post. If you objected to the far-left BLM movement, you were banned. If you reported on Hunter Biden's laptop and his foreign entanglements, like the New York Post did just days before the 2020 election, your post was suppressed. This censorship undermined the free and open debate that has sustained our Nation for now 250 years.

Apple has another thing coming if they think—Big Tech thinks they are going to pull this off again.

Earlier this month, FTC Chairman Andrew Ferguson sent a letter to Apple CEO Tim Cook calling on the company to review its policies and warning that the suppression of viewpoints, regardless of political affiliation, could violate consumer protection rules.

Last week, I sent a letter to Tim Cook demanding answers about how featured articles on Apple News are chosen, how the company reviews or audits those decisions, and how third-party news outlets can appeal unfair exclusions from its platform. We want to know: What is their criteria? What is their decision making? Is this subjective?

So we have given a deadline of March 4 to hear from Mr. Cook. I am looking forward to his reply.

I think it is important to note that Americans increasingly rely on services like Apple News for their information. They deserve to have the point and the counterpoint, to know two sides of the story.

I am grateful that under President Trump, the era of Big Tech censorship is drawing to a close. We are going to continue to fight until these companies abandon their blatant bias and censorship against conservatives.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UKRAINE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here to mark a solemn anniversary.

Yesterday marked the fourth anniversary of Vladimir Putin's unprovoked, unjustified, brutal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine. He sought to extinguish a democracy. He sought to erase a whole people's identity, their culture, their way of life, their language. He sought to redraw the map of Europe by force, against all of the norms and accepted rules that have preserved a peace for decades since World War II.

He failed.

Four years later, Ukraine stands proudly, resolutely, bloodied, scarred, but unbroken. Russia is not winning. There is a false narrative, in fact, that Russia is prevailing because it is taking bits and tiny pieces of territory at humongous cost in lives and resources. That false narrative must be dispelled, and I am here to say to my colleagues, to America, to the world: We know Ukraine can win if it has the tools to prevail. It has the will and the determination, unquestionably. It has the courage and the strength. It needs the weapons and the economic sanctions that will enable it to prevail.

Peace is our devout hope, but peace will be achieved only through strength because Vladimir Putin is unserious about peace now and will become serious only by demonstration—unequivocally and unambiguously—of strength.

I have just come back from a trip to Ukraine, both to Kyiv and to Odessa, meeting the engineers who are repairing the electric generation sources that Putin has bombed—he has bombed all of the nonnuclear sources—children who have been kidnapped and saved and brought back; they are among the 20,000 that Putin has abducted; President Zelenskyy, who remains absolutely firm in his determination to lead the people of Ukraine, to push back the Russians; and in Odessa, the frontline forces on the Black Sea who are not only detecting but destroying the invading drones and missiles; and the faith community there who have remained so absolutely supportive.

The fact is that Putin is bombing not only Ukraine—civilians in their hospitals, homes, and education centers, schoolrooms—he is also bombing American businesses. Of the 600 major corporations with operations in Ukraine, almost half of them—300—have been damaged or destroyed in some way by Putin's bombing, drones, missiles. Putin is attacking Ukraine, but he is also attacking America, and America should be outraged by these attacks on American businesses.

In the meantime, my main takeaway from this trip—my ninth—was the incredible endurance and resilience of the Ukrainian people. But they don't want our applause; they want ammunition. They need weapons. They want weapons, not words. And so I am here to advocate, on this fourth anniversary, that we give them the tools they need to prevail because they are fighting on.

This conflict is the most destructive in Europe since the Second World War.