



DAVID STEFFEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 4TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Rep. Steffen Introduces Kids Online Safety Act

Legislation will empower parents, protect children from social media dangers

Madison, WI – Today, Representative David Steffen (R-Howard) formally introduced legislation that will establish important protections for Wisconsin kids who have social media accounts. The Kids Online Safety Act comes in response to the overwhelming volume of evidence connecting unrestricted social media use by kids to a wide range of mental and physical harms. Increased depression and anxiety, poor body image, cyberbullying, and online grooming are all well-documented risks our kids face while navigating the current online environment.

“This legislation is truly about empowering parents by providing them with a number of evidence-based tools to help their child safely navigate through social media. Our kids are no match for the addictive, relentless social media environment they face today, and parents have very few options at their disposal,” said Rep. Steffen.

Rep. Steffen’s proposal, which is modeled after the recently signed bipartisan Utah law, would establish a number of optional restrictions on social media accounts held by minors—it would be up to the parent to decide what works best for their child.

Specifically, Rep. Steffen’s legislation will:

- Allow parental oversight and access to their child’s account
- Require age verification to ensure optional restrictions are only placed on accounts held by kids
- Protect children during the overnight hours by establishing a nighttime curfew on their accounts
- Restrict the type of advertising and direct messaging targeted at minor accounts
- Impose penalties on social media companies for noncompliance

“The amount of unrestricted, extended online access our kids have is only continuing to grow. A study from Common Sense Media showed that kids ages 13 to 18 spend about nine hours a day looking at a screen—we have to start getting more engaged on this issue. Just as our kids count on us to protect them here in the real world, we have to be taking a hard look at how to do a better job of this in the virtual world,” said Rep. Steffen.

The bill will be circulating to gain co-sponsorship support over the next several weeks.

For more information please contact the office of Representative Steffen at (608)237-9104 or by email at Rep.Steffen@legis.wisconsin.gov.

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