

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade Member Kevin Mullin

Hearing on “Legislative Solutions to Protect Children and Teens Online”

December 2, 2025

Thank you Ranking Member Schakowsky, and thank you Mister Chair for convening this hearing on such an important topic.

Protecting kids is perhaps the single most unifying, bipartisan issue we have here in Congress. We all want to keep our kids safe. I myself am the father of two young boys who aren't yet – but will be before I know it – an age when they will be navigating the Internet on their own. To say I am worried for them is an understatement.

But the country – and Congress – is not without tools to keep people safe online. In fact, more than one hundred years ago, the Federal Trade Commission was set up to prevent harms to consumers of all kinds, including kids. Indeed, most of the bills we will be discussing today rely on the FTC to enforce them.

So that is why it has been stunning to see the contempt in which the Trump Administration has held the Commission. Rather than seeking from Congress a change in the law, President Trump has simply attempted to unlawfully fire two of its commissioners, eliminating bipartisan input.

Meanwhile, Chair Ferguson has attempted to dramatically reduce the Commission's staff through buyouts and other drastic measures. He bragged that he wants to get the Commission's staff size to its lowest in 10 years. The Chair has also been using the tools of the FTC to wage a culture war against medical professionals and parental choices he disagrees with. This is more than a harmful deviation from the Commission's mission – it undermines consumer protections for all of us by removing cops from their normal beat.

Yet today we will be talking about all of the things we want and need the FTC to do to protect kids online. But who will be doing that work? The remaining employees at the FTC who are already stretched thin?

As evidenced by this long list of bipartisan bills, there is clearly a lot of alignment across parties about the role we want the FTC to play. In that spirit, I hope that, as we discuss the legislative proposals on today's agenda, we acknowledge the need to fully fund the FTC, protect its bipartisan commission structure, and ensure the FTC is focused on the mission Congress gives it.

I look forward to a robust discussion today. I yield back.