

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Member Lori Trahan**

Markup of 18 Bills, Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade

December 11, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Protecting our kids when they are online is one of the most urgent responsibilities we face. It's a crisis for families in every corner of this country, and it demands urgent action from Congress. That's why I'm so frustrated that today's markup fails once again to meet the seriousness of what families are living through. Some may point to the number of bills on today's agenda as evidence of progress, I'm not one of them and I urge my colleagues not to be fooled.

When I look at this list of legislation, I don't see a focus on platform design. I don't see comprehensive privacy. And I don't see market reform. But what I do see is a continuation of a status quo where Big Tech continues productizing its users, insulating itself from competition, and shifting the responsibility for protecting kids onto parents who are stretched thinner than ever. And it would be bad enough if these bills simply failed to move us forward, but they actually take us back. They undermine the work that state legislators and state regulators are already doing to protect kids.

Mr. Chairman, when you combine weak standards with a wide, low federal ceiling, you get worst of all worlds legislation like the new version of KOSA. I'm proud to stand with parents, advocates, and our colleagues on this Committee who oppose this legislation. And because we're here together – with the very families this markup was supposed to serve in the audience – I want to offer a better path forward. It's a tech policy agenda focused on real systemic reform...Reform that targets the core practices, business models, and market dominance of Big Tech that perpetuate harm, especially to young people.

First is antitrust reform. When giant corporate monopolies shut out competition, they shut out the innovation that serves the public interest. We need to break up monopolies – just as Republican Teddy Roosevelt did over a century ago... We need to curtail vertical integration, and we need to require interoperability and data portability. Our competition laws must be updated so that parents and consumers have real choices, and so that smaller companies have a fair chance to succeed.

Second is comprehensive federal privacy and online safety standards that finally disrupt Big Tech's predatory harvesting, deployment, and sale of Americans' private data. State legislatures have repeatedly outpaced Congress in regulating digital platforms – a fact that should embarrass us all. And even when Congress does act, it's often in ways that entrench the

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status quo rather than improve it, which is exactly what we are seeing today. Comprehensive privacy and online safety legislation are opportunities for bipartisan, common-sense progress.

The third component is simple: independent and well-funded enforcement. Laws without enforcement are just words on paper, and parents across this country have seen enough empty letters from Congress. We need to preserve the independence of our regulators and fund them to do their jobs. That is the three-pronged strategy that I put forward to this committee...And I urge us to pursue it. I steadfastly remain ready to work in a bipartisan way to deliver the reforms that American families and consumers deserve.

And I yield back my time