



May 27, 2025

Vermont Senate  
109 State Street, Pavilion  
Montpelier, VT 05609

To the Members of the Senate of the State of Vermont:

Design It For Us is a youth-led coalition calling for stronger protections for kids, teens, and young adults online. We urge you, as people and digital natives, to **support the Vermont Age-Appropriate Design Code Act (AADC), or S. 69.**

As you consider this bill, we ask you to recognize the opportunity it presents, not only to protect young Vermonters from harm but to advance the potential for collaboration with our tech and business communities while safeguarding meaningful work and agency in a digital age.

The AADC is about designing online spaces that allow us to look to the future with confidence in our dignity and well-being. These protections are long overdue. Businesses that build platforms likely to be accessed by minors should be required to design for our safety, not just for profit. That's what the AADC would do. It brings the principles of consumer protection that already apply to physical products into the online world where young people spend much of their time.

We are the first generation raised on social media, and too often, we've been left to navigate online ecosystems designed to manipulate and addict. These platforms collect our data, exploit our attention, and compromise our mental health. This is not just about privacy, it's about our ability to think clearly, participate meaningfully in society, and shape our futures.

We urge you to listen to the stories from young Vermonters describing their experiences:

"As a teenager, I have seen first hand the damages of social media. Social media can have a devastating impact on ones mental health and can negatively influence how a person is feeling by forcing harmful media upon an individual as part of their marketing strategy. It is important that we do not allow social media companies to take advantage of our youth, so we can protect their mental well-being and safety."

*Gabriella C, Underhill (16)*

"Nowadays one cannot exist without having some connection to the internet. It has quickly become an integral part of daily life but right now it is incredibly predatory. Companies use it to endlessly advertise and manipulate everyone from children to adults. Scammers run rampant, and misinformation is everywhere. Furthermore, addiction to social media apps and the practices to make these locations addictive without consideration to the mental health of individuals is truly deplorable. Without proper legislation and accountability for social media platforms, companies, and advertisers, I cannot say that the internet is a safe space. In my own experience, I have been targeted by harmful ads, misinformation, and conditions that have negatively affected my mental health, leading to depression, in spite of using the internet considerably less than many of my peers, and many people even younger than myself that will and currently are, experiencing much worse. I believe that passing this bill in Vermont is not only important to the youth in Vermont, but also to adults and the elderly in helping to avoid potential

harm.”

*Andrais S, North Bennington (21)*

“It's long overdue for Vermont to take legislative action to protect the online safety of its residents. We've missed an opportunity to protect my generation. I've become desensitized to just about everything. It takes about three scrolls on Instagram reels for me to see a video of someone dying in a variety of ways. While I no longer react to seeing these videos, it all started with the first killing videos shown to me in grade school. There is NO reason a child before high school needs to be exposed to this sort of content without supervision. That is the reality, though. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, the admired social media sites young people have access to, give them access to things they should not. It only takes a like to ensure you continue seeing more unbelievable content. I plead with you to support this monumental piece of legislation that will help protect the youth of future generations. Hold these giant companies accountable for the irreparable damage they've done to so many people's psyches, and prevent such harm in the future.”

*Marcus A, Winooski (23)*

“I was 12 when social media started pushing “thinspo” accounts, which featured anorexic and bulimic women as inspirational models. It took me years to get past my eating disorders and, like most people with disordered eating, I've never fully recovered. Social media permanently damaged my body and my relationship with food.”

*Dana T, Burlington (24)*

“Growing up in Vermont, I always knew we did things differently here. Now, as a junior studying International Relations and minoring in Chinese and Computer Science, this is the time for action. With S.69, Vermont has the opportunity to demonstrate a balance between fostering innovation while also requiring crucial regulation that keeps us safe. We have the opportunity to lead the charge on regulating big tech and setting a precedent. So many children don't have parents like mine who can teach them about staying safe online. Sure, we can offload that curriculum to schools, but it takes far too long. The rapid growth of AI and its integration will need to be mitigated, no matter what.”

*Kaitlynn C, Sunderland (20)*

“The task of any society is simply to protect its future.”

*Jonathan P, Peru (21)*



We understand and appreciate the power of the internet. That is why we want to help shape it. The online world should be a place where we thrive intellectually, socially, and creatively. And it can be, but only if lawmakers act now to rein in the unchecked power of Big Tech and ensure that innovation serves the public good, not just corporate shareholders.

The Age-Appropriate Design Code would do just that:

- Require default privacy protections for minors;
- Prohibit manipulative design features that encourage compulsive use;
- Ensure transparency in how platforms collect and use our data.
- Empower young users with tools to control their digital presence.
- Ban discriminatory and unsafe practices that disproportionately harm marginalized youth.

This legislation is thoughtful, focused, and urgently needed. It holds companies accountable not for what users post or say, but for how platforms are designed and operated. It addresses system-level risks that quietly erode our autonomy, our mental health, and our ability to contribute meaningfully to the workforce and civic life.

Attorney General Clark's work in holding companies like Meta accountable is setting a national example. Now Vermont has the chance to build on that leadership and pass legislation that puts young people first, protecting our rights, our futures, and our ability to thrive in a tech-driven world.

Your vote in favor of the Vermont Age-Appropriate Design Code Act would be a vote for a future in which technology is built with intention and care, where young people are not only protected, but *respected*.

Thank you for your leadership and for choosing to stand with youth in building a healthier digital future!

Sincerely,

Andrais S, *North Bennington* (21)

Dana T, *Burlington* (24)

David M, *Manchester* (21)

Ellis G, *Pawlet* (22)

Gabriella C, *Underhill* (16)

Jonathan P, *Peru* (21)

Kaitlynn C, *Sunderland* (20)

Marcus A, *Winooski* (23)

Rep. William "Will" Greer, *North Bennington* (22)

Sarah C, *Middlebury*, (21)

Thomas A, *Dorset*, (17)