



May 27, 2025

Governor Phil Scott
109 State Street, Pavilion
Montpelier, VT 05609

Dear Governor Scott:

Design It For Us is a youth-led coalition advocating for safer online platforms and social media. We aim to drive and achieve key policy reforms to protect kids, teens, and young adults online through the mobilization of youth activists, leaders, and voices. **We ask you to support the Vermont Age-Appropriate Design Code (AADC)** when it comes to your desk.

As part of historic privacy protections passed by the General Assembly, the AADC provisions of S. 69 offer clear, practical guardrails for businesses whose products are likely to be accessed by young people. These measures—such as default privacy settings and limits on manipulative design—represent the digital equivalent of product safety standards that already protect consumers in other sectors. These common-sense expectations will support Vermont businesses in creating products that families trust, without punishing innovation or overburdening small companies. Businesses will be incentivized to design safer products to meet the best interests of families, just as they are incentivized now to meet shareholder interests.

In fact, this legislation positions Vermont as a leader in youth-centered digital innovation. The AADC fosters an online environment that supports learning, creativity, and well-being—values that drive the entrepreneurial spirit of Vermont. A generation that is supported and protected online will grow into a workforce that is more focused, resilient, and prepared to contribute meaningfully to our economy. Investing in youth protections is, in effect, investing in the future of work and Vermont's economy.

We are digital natives; much of our generation has come of age under the influence of unregulated and addictive platform design. Toxic algorithms optimized for engagement—rather than well-being—have undermined our attention, mental health, and development. These design practices limit our potential as learners, creators, and future employees. Vermont Attorney General Clark has highlighted this danger in her [lawsuit](#) against Meta, revealing the platform's internal research showing that teens feel trapped in digital environments that they can't easily escape.

Social media is key in degrading our attention span through no fault of our own. Social media's addictive design makes it more difficult to thrive in a world beyond a screen. This very fact threatens our ability to develop and become the adults we want to be as we want to build futures for ourselves, find employment, and develop strong social skills. We should not have to wrestle between social media and contributing to Vermont's economy. Social media is stifling opportunity, innovation, and ideas in our state.

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 Vermont acts now to rein in the unchecked power of Big Tech and ensure that innovation serves the public good.

We’re asking for thoughtful digital infrastructure—one that gives young people the tools to focus, grow, and contribute. That’s what the AADC provides:

- 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 gives businesses clarity on how to build responsibly, while shielding Vermont’s next generation from unnecessary harm. In doing so, it helps ensure a healthier, more productive, and more innovative future for our state.

We urge you to sign the Vermont AADC into law and help protect the next generation online.

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)