



February 13, 2024

Dear Delegates and Senators,

[Common Sense Media](#) strongly supports the proposed Maryland Online Data Privacy Act of 2024 (HB0567) and (SB0541). With more than 100 million unique users, 1.2 million member teachers, and 87,000 member schools, Common Sense is the nation’s largest organization dedicated to ensuring that children and families thrive—and remain safe—in the rapidly-changing digital age. In Maryland alone, more than 2,000 teachers have registered to teach Common Sense’s digital citizenship and literacy materials to their students in nearly 800 Common Sense recognized schools.

[Recent research](#) makes it clear that concerns about internet privacy are growing—as many as 71% of Americans are worried about how companies are using their personal data, while 89% are somewhat or very concerned about social media companies collecting data about kids. As of this writing, [13 states](#) have passed comprehensive data privacy bills while at least [20 more](#) have proposed bills that would particularly strengthen kids' data privacy protections. Maryland’s kids and families also deserve strong data privacy protections.

Common Sense emphasizes its support for several important provisions in the Act:

- 1. Protections Against Sale of User Data and Targeted Advertising:** The Act prohibits and limits the collection of personal data “for the sole purpose of content personalization or marketing” without user consent and bans the sale of data from users under 13. That ensures that consumers and kids are protected from having their online data processed and monetized.
- 2. Prevent Companies From Pretending They Don’t Have Kids On their Sites:** The Act’s protection of kids applies when platforms “know or should know” that a user is under 18. That language stops companies from pleading ignorance concerning their use of kids’ data.
- 3. Protect Teenagers’ Privacy:** The Act fills in a gap in the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) by protecting teens (ages 13-18) and not just kids (under 13).

While we recommend that the bill could be further strengthened by clarifying the ban on targeted advertising to children under 13 by changing 14-4607(A)(5) to remove “at least 13 years old and” so that it applies to all consumers under 18, Common Sense Media offers our unambiguous support for the Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly Grosshans".

Holly Grosshans, Senior Counsel, Tech Policy
Common Sense Media