

**McComas Testimony - HB 715 Hearing, March 10th, 2026**  
**Algorithmic Addiction Fund**

**HB 715 (Del. Rosenberg) - Favorable**

My name is Christine McComas and I am the mother of Grace McComas, for whom **Maryland's Grace's Law (2013 & Grace's Law 2.0, 2019)** against cyber abuse is named. We lost our joyful and kind-hearted Grace to suicide on Easter Sunday of 2012 at the dawn of smartphone and social media availability. No one knew then how invasive and pervasive digital technology could be and how much of a toll it would take on our children and society.

The research now shows that cyberbullying is an independent risk factor for depression and suicidality and the trajectory of smartphone and social media adoption tracks very closely with the alarming decline in child mental health, and even lowered cognitive ability as noted by the expert panelist who spoke at this U.S. Senate hearing I attended in January entitled "[Plugged Out: Examining the Impact of Technology on America's Youth](#)", which starts at 32:32.)

*I highly recommend watching the short intro statements of the panel experts.*

I am a founding member of [Parents SOS](#) - we have all lost children to different social media harms. We were on Capitol Hill [representing our children](#) at the 2024 Senate Judiciary Hearing where Meta's Mark Zuckerberg and the CEOs of TikTok, Twitter/X, Snapchat and Discord were called to account for the harm to children that their warped business models have wrought. At the time Zuckerberg said that they didn't allow 13 and under on Instagram and that he didn't really think social media harmed children. (In fact there are millions of children under 13 on the platform and they know it and exploit them.)

Thanks to corporate whistleblowers, we know better- it's clear that Big Tech is the Big Tobacco of our generation, intentionally using manipulative, addictive design in order to collect data, later sold for \$BILLIONS in ad revenue, aimed at kids.

I recently joined survivor parents in front of the courthouse in Los Angeles as we [stood vigil as the first landmark Social Media Addiction Trials have begun.](#) which was covered world-wide (see photo below). ^^^^ **\*please watch.**

Witnesses and documents in that trial, the first of thousands, make clear that executives at these companies were very aware of the harm being done but repeatedly chose profit over safety.

We are now in the midst of a serious public health crisis that threatens the safety and wellbeing of our children and monies collected in this fund will be needed.

I'd like to suggest that the title of the fund be changed to better reflect and support the harms, reading more like "Algorithmic Protection Fund to Prevent, Mitigate and Educate about Online Harms to Children" and widen the help it would offer to reflect the dangers that exist, including

- Education and wide community discussions on the harms that have regularly taken the lives of children, especially new and unfamiliar ones:
  - Deep fake AI, AI Chatbots and new dangerous unpredictable AI usage yet to be discovered
  - Cyber abuse (Cyberbullying)
  - Online challenges like the 'choking challenge' that looks like a game but is frequently deadly
  - Fake prescription pills sold online filled with deadly fentanyl- in recent years taking the lives of 22 young people a week
  - Sexual extortion (Sextortion) catfishing- fake personas starting online relationships and urging the sharing of intimate photos, which immediately turns into threats to share with everyone in their lives. Some kids lost to suicide within hours or less
  - Disordered eating and body dysmorphia- repeated content sent that the child never went looking for. 'Beauty filters', inc. plastic surgery- internal documents show that 18 out of 18 experts that Meta asked said they were harmful but they chose NOT to remove them
  - Suicide-baiting, suicidality-rabbit holes of repeated pushed algorithmic content ending up in chat rooms encouraging suicide and even broadcasting live suicides
  - Predators, usually looking to get kids into private messaging
 

A recent Op/Ed in the National Review said the ""New Mexico AG is trying a separate case against Meta describing it as ""the largest marketplace for predators and pedophiles globally,"" Evidence in that trial includes an email from a (former Meta) child safety professional claiming that 500,000 minors *per day* received targeted sexual messages from adults on Instagram""

- **\*\*Education and \*\*promotion to make Grace's Law 2.0** and its many protections widely known which will act as a deterrent and change the behavior of individuals that would harm others on social media, and when needed, be used to charge those who do, imposing fines and even prison in the worst cases. (*Even some law enforcement and DJS people are not aware or not using it properly, especially when a protection order is needed a.s.a.p.. For instance it wasn't used for the Deep Fake AI child sexual abuse material made of Maryland school kids*). Perhaps even legal help to file an immediate protection order, as DJS has failed to do so in a timely fashion.

**There have been repeated failures among school admin, law enforcement/SRO's and DJS in informing and helping children and families in distress.**

- Education and support is needed re: the widespread sexualized violence against women, consent, unwanted sexual advances and misogyny, rise of incels, production of Deep Fake AI and CSAM (child sexual assault material), primarily aimed at females
- Education on Title IX protections against discrimination and harassment (once they are reinstated)
- Digital and media literacy and democracy

**And maybe even digital and in-person civility education, my favorite being the need to Remember **G.R.A.C.E.** ~ by **G**iving **R**espect **A**nd **C**ompassion to **E**veryone.**

Please pass HB 715. Thank you for your consideration.

Christine McComas, Mother of Grace, forever 15

[Grace McComas Memorial](#)

[Parents SOS](#)





BUSINESS / TECH

## Arguments to begin in key U.S. social media addiction trial



Parents who lost children to social media–related harms hold a vigil on Feb. 5 ahead of a social media addiction trial set to begin this week in Los Angeles. | REUTERS



