

March 6, 2026



Honorable Members of the Maryland  
House Economic Matters Committee  
230 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**We write in support of HB 1179, commonly referred to as the App Store Accountability Act, because it is a pragmatic, privacy-first, child-centric solution, utilizing existing technologies, to one of the most pressing challenges of our time: protecting children and families in an increasingly complex and exploitative digital world.**

I lead Protect Young Eyes, a national digital wellness organization that advises legislators, schools, churches, and non-profits on the most effective techniques to protect children from online harm. Our activities include consulting with law enforcement (Internet Crimes Against Children officers), Children's Assessment Centers, and the world's largest technology organizations, sharing our expertise in parental controls, filters, and device set-up.

App stores serve as the central gatekeepers to how Maryland children interact on their devices, who use approximately 40 different apps per week. This unique position of App Stores makes them a natural and efficient doorway for implementing critical, commonsense protections, and for complying with basic contract law.

**The strengths of HB 1179 include:**

- 1. Utilizing Existing Systems for Efficiency:** App stores **already collect** extensive user data, including age and family relationships, through features like Apple's Family Sharing and Google's Family Link. By building on these tools, the Act avoids adding complexity while maximizing effectiveness.
- 2. Protecting Privacy Through Anonymized Data:** The Act mandates that age information shared with developers **remains anonymized**, safeguarding individual privacy. App Stores already share other types of anonymized data, like "Did you subscribe to the app?" with developers via API millions of times daily.
- 3. Promoting Digital Wellness for all Maryland Children:** The Act allows developers to **automatically** enable safety-related features and defaults for **all Maryland minors**. Safety by default ensures *all* children receive the same protections. Not just those with parents with the ability and resources to navigate complex features.

The App Store Accountability Act is a secure, family-first, child-centric path forward. I suspect those who want access to your child's data won't like it. But that's where we're counting on the Maryland legislature to prevent trillion-dollar companies from signing contracts with your precious children.

If you visit Apple's App Store website, at the top it says: **"The apps you love. From a place you can trust."**

In an era when digital harms to children are escalating, HB 1179 offers app stores an opportunity to fulfill their stated commitments to trust and safety. It sends a powerful message: that digital gatekeepers must take their responsibility to protect Maryland children and families as seriously as any brick-and-mortar institution would.

**HB 1179 isn't asking app stores to do the job of parents. It's simply asking that they obey the law by receiving consent.**

I ask for a do-pass on HB 1179. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris McKenna". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris McKenna  
Founder, CEO, Protect Young Eyes  
President, The Better Tech Project