

Mandatory Content Filters: A Misguided Approach to Protecting Children Online

The Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA) is dedicated to safeguarding children online while actively educating parents about the digital tools available to protect their children. Lawmakers in some states, including Alabama, Utah and Indiana, are considering bills that would require safety filters on all mobile devices to automatically shield children from explicit and harmful content. However well-intentioned, these proposals would establish unattainable goals that are technologically impossible and would fail to meet their intended purpose.

Shortcomings of this type of this legislation:



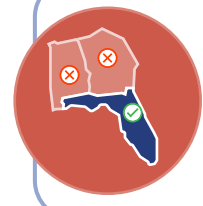
Tools Already Exist for Parents to Limit Content

Parents currently have access to child protection filters for various media, from music and videos to websites, images, and written materials. Creating a single filter covering all these mediums is not technologically feasible. Such a legislative requirement would impose unrealistic expectations, creating a significant compliance challenge for device manufacturers and inevitably leading to user frustration and costly litigation.



Parental Choice for Device Restrictions

Devices are most commonly used by adults, so a law imposing widespread restrictions would be unnecessary for the majority of users. Instead, parents should be empowered to activate the filters they choose on their children’s devices – protections that are often already in place. It’s crucial to educate parents about ways they can already protect their children online, including setting screen time limits, blocking specific sites, and preventing access to explicit content.



State-Specific Device Filters are Technologically Infeasible

Mobile devices cannot activate filters and other protective measures based on which state they may be in. The responsibility for implementing child protective measures should fall to parents accessing specific websites and online platforms, rather than placing such an impossible burden on device manufacturers.

CCIA urges lawmakers to prioritize legislation that focuses on educating teachers, parents, and mentors about the available tools for protecting children online. Rather than imposing an impractical and technologically unworkable law, the government should explore targeted approaches for creating effective and feasible age-specific protections.

