

Ohio lawmakers take another run at adding parent controls for teen social media use

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Ohio lawmakers want to limit teens' access to smartphone applications and social media by giving parents a one-stop control point.

Republicans Michele Reynolds and Melanie Miller are sponsoring companion bills in the Ohio Senate and House that would streamline how parents control what apps their children can download.

The control point would be at the app store level for kids under 16, they said. This would simplify the process and allow parents to say yes or no before downloads occur.

It's not foolproof, but it's a tool for parents to use in supervising their children, said [Reynolds](#), a state senator from Canal Winchester.

Their bills are similar to legislation introduced in several states and signed into law in Iowa.

Studies show that teens' heavy use of social media negatively affects their mental health and opens the door to cyberbullying, sextortion, low self-esteem and other problems.

Two years ago, a federal court blocked [Ohio's Social Media Parental Notification Act](#), which would have required certain social media sites to get verifiable parental permission for children under age 16 to create new accounts on the sites.

TikTok and other tech companies filed a federal lawsuit in early 2024 claiming that the Ohio law was too broad and violates the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

[NetChoice](#), the trade group, said families can decide how they use social media and that tech companies already have protections for youth users.

The [case challenging Ohio's Social Media Parental Notification Act](#) is still pending in federal court.

Reynolds and Miller said the new approach sidesteps such legal challenges by applying to all apps at the store level.