

House Judiciary Committee
HB 302 – Proponent Testimony
Kate Charlet, Google
October 8, 2025

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Synenberg and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify as a proponent of HB 302 today.

My name is Kate Charlet, and I'm a Director on Google's public policy team, where I lead our work on cybersecurity, privacy, and child safety. Before coming to Google, I spent a decade in public service, at the Pentagon as a senior defense official for cybersecurity policy and at the White House National Security Council.

At Google, our work is guided by a long-standing commitment to protect young users, and we operate on the principle of creating age-appropriate experiences for everyone on our platforms. We provide minors with industry-leading content, wellbeing, and privacy protections, backed by age assurance. This includes disabling personalized ads, blocking access to mature content on YouTube and Google Play, enabling our strictest SafeSearch settings, and much more.

I'm here today to share Google's support for House Bill 302. We believe this is the smartest, safest, and most effective way to protect children in Ohio's digital world. At its core, this bill is about a simple idea: working together to protect kids. This goal is a team sport. It takes everyone—the app stores, the phone makers, and the app developers themselves—working together. At Google, we recognize we have a role here, but so do others - and this bill makes sure every player on the team is doing their part.

Smart, Targeted, and Private Approach

This law requires app stores to signal to relevant apps that the user is a minor, without sharing their specific age or identity. The app must then provide parental controls, get a parent's permission for mature content, and is banned from sending personalized ads to that child.

What makes this bill so effective is that it's both targeted and privacy-preserving. It focuses protections where they are needed most. And it is built on the commonsense principle that you shouldn't collect sensitive data from every user when it isn't necessary. Instead of demanding every Ohioan verify their age for every app, it uses a simple, privacy-safe "age signal."

This bill is also smart about when app stores share an age signal. Let's be honest, your calculator app or your phone's flashlight doesn't need to know if a user is 15 or 50. This bill

rightly focuses only on the apps that offer different experiences for kids and adults—like social media—where it actually matters. This protects kids without creating unnecessary burdens for the thousands of small developers in Ohio making great, safe apps for everyone.

Finally, this bill goes beyond just apps by giving parents powerful tools to filter obscene material on web browsers and search engines, creating a stronger, multi-layered defense for their kids.

The Right Responsibilities for the Right People

This bill makes sure that developers of higher-risk apps have the responsibility to do the right thing for children. They know their products best, and this bill requires them to do three critical things:

- Keep adult content away from kids.
- Get a parent's permission before a child can use features that aren't suitable for them.
- Bans personalized ads for children.

The Ohio Way vs. Flawed Alternatives

By taking this balanced approach, we think Ohio can lead the nation and avoid the serious mistakes we've seen in other states. And to be very direct about why the alternative is flawed:

- We don't believe that EVERYONE in the whole state should have to age verify just to access basic, low risk online services. It's invasive and it's unnecessary. Imagine having to show your driver's license just to download a weather app.
- We don't believe that app stores should broadcast sensitive age data of the state's children to millions of developers that don't need it. It's a privacy and child safety nightmare, and we need a more balanced approach.
- We don't believe that parents should be forced to parent in a certain way, like the other models require. Instead, we should make it easier for them to make the choices that are right for their family.
- Finally, the alternative model is like locking the front door but leaving all the windows wide open. Kids can still get to the same content through a web browser or pre-loaded apps. It provides a false sense of security.

House Bill 302 is different. It's targeted. It's comprehensive. And it respects the privacy of Ohioans. It's the right way forward, and we are proud to support it.

Thank you.