

Ohio HB 302 Proponent Testimony
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Chairman Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Synenberg, and members of the House Judiciary Committee — thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill (“HB”) 302.

My name is Joshua Edmonds, and I am the CEO of DigitalC, a Cleveland-based community Internet Service Provider (“ISP”) headquartered in the historic Hough neighborhood. Our mission is simple: connect families to opportunity by delivering fast, affordable, and community-centered broadband. Since January 2024, we have connected over 4,500 homes, trained more than 10,000 residents, and reached over 140,000 households through our work with Cleveland families, schools, and neighborhoods.

We are a mission-driven, Ohio-based ISP working daily with parents, schools, and local leaders to make the digital world safer and more accessible. We work closely with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to ensure that students can safely and reliably access the online resources they need for their education and future success.

DigitalC is the only ISP in Ohio built by communities, for communities. We don’t just provide broadband – we build trust with families, schools, and neighborhoods. And that’s exactly why age verification matters to us.

When you work at the neighborhood level, like we do, you see firsthand how the digital world affects real families. Parents want their children to thrive online – to learn, connect, and explore – but they also want to know their kids are safe. Unfortunately, today’s online environment makes that nearly impossible.

If we don’t know who a child is online, then we can’t build meaningful protections around them. That’s true for families, schools, and community ISPs like ours. Age verification creates the digital “fencing” that allows parents to focus protections where they’re needed most, without collecting unnecessary personal data or limiting adults’ freedoms.

HB 302 strikes a commonsense balance. It empowers Ohio’s parents to better monitor their children’s online activities and ensures that companies, from app makers to app stores, share responsibility in building a safer digital Ohio.

At DigitalC, we believe every Ohio child deserves a safe digital future, and that starts with age verification done right. It's the foundation that enables families, schools, and providers like us to collaborate in protecting children without compromising privacy or innovation.

On behalf of DigitalC and the families we serve, I respectfully urge your support for this legislation.

Thank you.

