

Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Brian Steel, and I'm here representing the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police in support of Senate Bill 167, the App Store Accountability Act.

Let me tell you what we see on the job. Every single day, young people have harmful experiences online and the real world consequences change the paths of their lives entirely. . When they're on their phones or computers, young people are vulnerable to online predators, cyberbullying that leads to real-world violence, and exploitation. And a lot of it starts with a simple app download.

And here's what we hear from parents over and over again: "I had no idea my child downloaded that app. I didn't know they were talking to that person. I didn't know what was happening until it was too late."

That needs to change.

Senate Bill 167 does something very straightforward—it puts parents back in the driver's seat. Before a child downloads an app, parents get a notification. They can look at what their kid wants to download, make a decision, and that's it. One notification. One decision point. Simple.

Now, I know there's another bill being discussed—Senate Bill 175. And I'm going to be blunt with you. That bill creates problems, it doesn't solve them.

Senate Bill 175 would require age verification across individual apps, browsers, operating systems—basically everywhere a kid interacts with technology. That means kids are handing over personal information to dozens, maybe hundreds of different companies. Think about that from a law enforcement perspective. Every single place that collects a child's data is another vulnerability. Another potential breach. Another place where predators and criminals could access information about our kids.

Ohioans become victims of identity theft every day. Personal data is the key to yours and your family's finances not to mention secrets you don't want to share with the world. The more places that hold sensitive information about children, the more risk we're creating.

Senate Bill 167 takes the opposite approach. It keeps that verification in one secure place—the app store. Kids aren't spreading their personal information all over the internet. Parents aren't trying to manage fifty different platforms with fifty different settings. It's centralized. It's secure. And it actually works.

From a public safety standpoint, this is the right approach. It gives parents the tools they need to protect their kids before something happens, not after. And that's what good policy should do—prevent problems, not just respond to them after the damage is done.

The polling on this is clear. Eighty percent of Ohio parents support the app store approach to parental approval. Eighty-five percent of Republican parents back it. When you see numbers like that, you're looking at a real need that families across this state are feeling.

Parents aren't asking for the impossible here. They're asking for basic tools that let them do their jobs as parents. They're asking to be kept in the loop. They're asking for one simple notification before their kids download apps that could put them at risk.

Senate Bill 167 gives them exactly that.

Senate Bill 175 goes in the wrong direction. It complicates the system, multiplies privacy risks, and makes it harder for parents to stay involved. That's not what Ohio families need, and frankly, it's not what makes our jobs easier as law enforcement.

Support the bill that actually works. Support the bill that keeps it simple and keeps parents in control.

Pass Senate Bill 167, and let's give Ohio families the tools they're asking for.

Thank you for your time today.