House passes KIDS Act, sending online child safety debate to the Senate

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On July 7, the House of Representatives passed the KIDS Act (H.R. 7757) in a vote of 267-117, advancing a package of online child safety measures aimed at establishing baseline federal protections for minors while allowing states to enact stronger safeguards. The legislation reflects years of congressional efforts to strengthen protections for children online and follows a bipartisan agreement reached in the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

The package includes provisions requiring AI chatbots to disclose that they are not human, restricting minors' access to disappearing messages, and requiring age-verification technologies for certain content. The bill also establishes federal standards for children's online safety while preserving states' ability to adopt more stringent protections and does not preempt state artificial intelligence laws.

While House passage marks a significant milestone, substantial challenges remain before the legislation can become law. The House and Senate continue to differ on key elements of child online safety policy, including age-verification requirements, First Amendment concerns, and whether online platforms should be subject to a "duty of care" obligation requiring them to design products with children's safety in mind. While this legislation may not see final passage this Congress, this has been an ongoing bipartisan area of interest as Congress looks to find agreement on how to regulate artificial intelligence and work will likely continue into the next Congressional session.