

November 29, 2025

Dear Senators,

My son could recite an essay's worth of facts about every animal before he started kindergarten. Starting around the age of 7 months, everyone (literally everyone, including strangers passing by in the grocery aisle) noticed his advanced verbal skills and intelligence. His presence immediately commands the room. He loves music and began playing drums at 18 months. He decided a few months later that he wanted to be a rock star, and has never swayed from that dream. He loves his family and friends fiercely and with loyal devotion.

Beginning in the summer of 2023, he fell deeper and deeper into a mental health spiral. All of that light and life was slowly fading away. He was self harming, completely isolated, full of rage, and losing touch with everything that made him happy. I begged for help from his providers (therapist, psychiatrist, and pediatrician) for months, telling them I felt like I was watching him commit suicide in slow motion. I was told it was normal teenage depression and rebellion, and that so many kids self harm and experience severe mental health crises now it's not a reason to escalate treatment. The inpatient and intensive outpatient spots are all full anyway.

The self harm kept getting worse. He talked about violence and politically extreme conspiracies nonstop. I kept begging for more intensive treatment, telling his providers I was watching him commit suicide in slow motion. All we received was increased medication and more "this is just how it is for teens now". What I didn't know at the time was that I was describing the checklist for children that may be entrapped in 764. It wasn't recognized until it was nearly too late.

In Feb 2024, he was hospitalized on a psychiatric hold after we discovered a large hunting knife he secretly bought online. The hospital staff described his entire torso, most of his arms and thighs as "covered" in self harm. My son told them he couldn't stop thinking about killing himself and what it would like to be dead, but he didn't really want to do it because he knew it would hurt his family. He asked to be admitted because he was scared the thoughts would take over and he couldn't keep himself safe. We still didn't know about his secret online life.

Over the next week, the local police and FBI got involved. I learned my son had bypassed my parental controls and hidden his online activity, becoming addicted to content posted online by 764 and other extremist NVE groups. This content, dubbed "ultra violent" by law enforcement, glorified self harm, suicide (often live streamed),

murders, sexual assaults, and more. Children are coerced into posting and DM'ing their own self harm and suicide CSAM content. Between his smartphone and school issued Chromebook, he was viewing these posts and websites up to 12 hours per day. A handful of video thumbnails gave me nightmares for a year. I hate to think of what it did to his developing, teenage brain.

He used the knife he purchased to perform "blood rituals" he saw in 764 content. Symbols from 764 and other extremist groups were carved into his body and drawn on paper with pencil and even his own blood. These rituals left permanent scars. He had hundreds of self harm photos on his phone, and in the 2 weeks before he was hospitalized, it increased to alarming levels. The day he was admitted inpatient, he had spent the school day online researching how to hang himself.

No one should ever have to see photos of their child this way. No child should ever be coerced into a hopeless, nihilistic view of life where the only release is harming yourself, but in reality they are producing the darkest, most violent CSAM imaginable. I still can't wrap my head around how this happened to my child.

I followed the strictest recommendations for parental controls, had screen time limits, blocked social media, and spot checked his online activity. I instilled values of tolerance, inclusion, prioritizing real world connections and time away from technology. I educated my kids to recognize extremism, conspiracy theories and watching out for creepy people online. Supposedly, I did everything "right", but it wasn't enough.

Thankfully, I saved his life, but it took 18 months of intensive therapy to stabilize him. Though stable, he is still working through the trauma of what happened to him, which could take years. He is alive, but neither he nor the rest of our family will never be the same.

Current laws meant no one was held accountable, and without consequences, the problem is growing exponentially. My son (who has had a flip phone since this happened) reports his classmates now see this content in their normal social media feeds, and it is more rampant than ever. An entire generation of children is being coerced into thinking self harm and suicide CSAM is "normal" because they see it every day online. We must pass laws that recognize the modern age of the internet and reality of online CSAM, so that no child has to experience this ever again.

Sincerely yours,