

My 13 year old son Levi, had Instagram for 40 hours before he was murdered by a sextortionist who capitalized on Meta's lax safety standards to befriend, groom and target him! We all, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers, have witnessed an explosion of innovation during our lifetime, yet, as Isaac Asimov wrote, "the saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom." Although it's too late for Levi, I am calling on you, the elected officials of our nation, to expedite your judiciousness to protect the lives of your remaining constituents.

The 1966 Congress passed the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act because data showed that fatalities and injuries on the road had increased 6 fold in over 40 years. NCMEC reports that online enticement reports increased 300% between 2021 and 2023. Through just 6 months of 2025 it is up another 275% year over year. At this rate it will be 6 fold in just 24 months, not 40 years.

The first half of 2025 has seen a 75% increase in reports of financial sextortion, believed to be the most under-reported crime given the stigma attached, while Generative AI has grown 6500% in the same timeframe. That's not 6 fold, that's 650 fold! Your speed at regulating the tech industry needs to match this exponential growth, however instead, the legislative gap is immense. There are over 2,000 new apps being released on the Apple App Store EACH DAY. No parent can keep up with that!

Society has celebrated the rise of the internet and actually defended its ability to provide constant communication, constant access to data and money, and global connection. It's time to prioritize human life over profit! You must be judicious and pass legislation that makes immoral use of information technology unlawful and overhaul statutes like Section 230; because, just like car manufacturers and big tobacco, tech companies will not self-regulate when there is profit to be made.

Meta knows that they are endangering children by not installing safeguards, but our legal system has not provided a way to hold them accountable or force them to aid in the prosecution of the criminals responsible for killing our children. There is a way to balance free speech and innovation and stay true to the sentiments of the Constitution while protecting all citizens, especially children, from harmful content. Just like tobacco is a health hazard and cars are dangerous, the products of the information age require legislation that limits accessibility and use by minors and punishment for companies and persons that abuse this limitation. Our founding fathers NEVER intended there to be laws that would tolerate my 13 year old son's death to preserve the "freedom" of man.

Levi is not a statistic. He is a casualty of companies and lawmakers who prioritize profit and election over the safety of our nation's children. Levi's death, and those of hundreds of other

American children were preventable. Platforms have been designed to be addictive and are being aimed at naive children and teens. Levi's death was not an accident, it was the direct result of the lack of duty of care! At this stage, there aren't even laws to allow us to prosecute anyone for his homicide.

Levi was a 13 year old boy with a promising future. He was an athletic, intelligent, curious teenage boy with a magnetic personality. He was a regular kid, growing up in a middle-class, 2-parent, Christian household. He was raised around positive role models, was active in numerous sports, attended church and loved his small community. Levi spent the summer of 2024 with his friends, teammates and family, swimming, going on bike rides, playing basketball, making money doing odd jobs and just being a kid! Levi idolized his big brother, was his father's shadow and showered his mom with affection. Levi planned to attend a trade school, join ROTC and be a college athlete. His big dreams made him the perfect target because he had everything to lose! Levi was seeking to connect through Instagram and it took his life instead! Levi died as the victim of a crime he didn't likely know existed, and neither did I. But the social media companies knew. Read the following story and you will know too.

On Sunday, August 18, 2024 at 8:30pm- Levi sent me a request to download Instagram. There were parental controls in place on his iPhone and our family's "device guidelines" were hanging on the refrigerator. Levi likely wanted Instagram because social media is where colleges find athletes. I approved the request. On Monday- August 19, 2024- Levi completed his household chores, tagged along to work with his dad, attended his own football practice and ended the night at his middle school open house. On Tuesday, August 20, 2024- Levi prepared for school because the following day was to be his first day of 8th grade. He sharpened his pencils, charged his ChromeBook and laid out the perfect outfit. He was planning to stay! But, Levi was in Heaven before lunch!

Our family did not know what happened. Levi had been home alone. Days later, we were told by the State Police that Levi was the victim of sextortion. The County Coroner ruled his death a homicide. It was simple to determine who/what was responsible for Levi's death. I believe there are dual perpetrators- the company who created the knowingly dangerous platform and welcomed predators to it, and the evil person/group that connected with my child online. Levi was a new account. He was an adventurous, curious, teenage boy. The predator was a bad actor who was allowed to "friend", groom, and gain Levi's trust. Levi made one wrong turn in the digital world and his killer(s) flipped the script and instilled shame and fear into him. He panicked under their threats to destroy his family and because he was just 13 and had an underdeveloped pre-frontal cortex, responsible for logic and reasoning, he couldn't think like Levi. When Levi died, our entire family was within 1 mile of home and his older brother was at work

just across the street. The criminal(s) and Big Tech execs took Levi from me, his dad, his brother, his friends, his teammates, and his FUTURE!

I understand that the goal of your committee was to identify a topic to learn about to be able to expand criminal law. Hopefully your experts and witnesses help you to learn about sextortion. I want you to see that this is a solvable, preventable issue. The tech executives are running companies with no integrity, putting profit before safety. Families like mine need you to make the changes so we can prosecute the criminals responsible for taking our children. Fix what's broken and allow law enforcement to investigate crimes of sextortion. Update the definitions and sentencing guidelines so it might deter predators from preying on American children and modernize the language to allow groups to be held responsible for the untimely deaths of children. CSAM goes against every fiber of the freedom our country stands for! There is SO much legislative action needed- we need a strong KOSA, like the version passed by the Senate last year with 91 votes. We need safe-by-design products and platforms. We need age verification to protect children from online harms. We need to update Section 230 to be consistent with the massive takeover of technology. It's time to close the loopholes.

I am an educator. My philosophy with my students and my own children has always been, when you know better, you have to do better. As a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, you now know better. I am also a grieving mom, turned advocate. I prefer to put my time into education and prevention because we won't arrest our way out, however I understand the need for statutes to hold criminals accountable. I am confident that the tide will shift. A grassroots movement is underway. Survivor parents are mobilized, criminal evidence is mounting and you can be part of the solution or part of the problem. Please, please, please, vote yes to a safe childhood. It won't help my family, but each day you wait, the next victim's family's heartache is on you!

Respectfully submitted on 12/1/25 by Tricia, Levi's mom



