

The Attention Economy Panelist Bios

Are Kids in Danger Online?



Maurine Molak

Maurine co-founded David's Legacy Foundation in 2016 after her 16-year-old son, David, died by suicide after experiencing months of relentless and threatening cyberbullying. The year prior to his death, David struggled with an addiction to social media and online gaming, which led to severe anxiety and depression. After David's death, Maurine worked with Texas legislators to pass "David's Law," which provided tools to address cyberbullying through the Education, Civil and Criminal codes. In the years following, she continued her advocacy with the successful passage of suicide prevention, digital citizenship requirements, and online harms prevention legislation.



Dawn Hawkins

Dawn Hawkins served as CEO and the Executive Director of the National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE) for the previous 14 years and continues as a senior advisor. She transformed NCOSE into the leading organization exposing the connections between all forms of sexual exploitation, including sex trafficking, prostitution, pornography, and child sexual abuse. She has called out and changed corporate entities facilitating exploitation through the annual Dirty Dozen List, fostered a broad international coalition of 600+ organizations, and constantly advocates for survivors.



Michael Toscano

Michael Toscano is Senior Fellow, Director of the Family First Technology Initiative for the Institute for Family Studies. He previously served as Executive Director. The IFS was awarded a Heritage Innovation Prize in recognition of Michael's efforts to advance laws nationwide to make technology safer for kids. He is a leader of the "Future for the Family" movement; and his writing has appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *National Affairs*, *American Affairs*, *Commonplace*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Post*, *First Things*, *Compact*, *The American Conservative*, *National Review*, *The Hill*, and elsewhere.

How Can the FTC Help to Protect Kids Online?



Meg Leta Jones

Prof. Meg Leta Jones is a Provost's Distinguished Associate Professor in the Communication, Culture & Technology program at Georgetown University where she researches rules and technological change with a focus on privacy and automation. Her first book, *Ctrl+Z: The Right to be Forgotten*, explores the social, legal, and technical issues surrounding digital oblivion. Most recently, she published *The Character of Consent: The History of Cookies and Future of Technology Policy*, which tells the history of digital consent through the lens of a familiar technical object. She regularly works with policymakers to support strong family technology policy.



Wes Hodges

Wes Hodges is the acting director of The Heritage Foundation Center for Technology and the Human Person. His team's focus includes online child safety, censorship, combating CCP digital control, competition policy, data privacy, AI, bioethics, and America-first innovation. Prior to this role, he spent years building policy coalitions among academics, attorneys, and policymakers for Heritage, American Compass, and The Federalist Society.



Jake Denton

Jake Denton leads the Office of Technology at the FTC. Previously, as a Research Associate at The Heritage Foundation's Tech Policy Center, he specialized in emerging technologies, international tech policy, digital surveillance, and data privacy. He has regularly appeared on FOX News and FOX Business providing analysis on Big Tech and digital privacy issues. His insights have been featured in many leading publications. Before joining Heritage, he led digital strategy and political operations at a consulting firm, where he developed successful campaigns for organizations navigating today's complex digital landscape.

Is Age Verification the Future of the Internet?



Laurie Schlegel

Rep. Schlegel was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 2021 and currently serves as Chairwoman of the House Education Committee. Throughout her legislative career, Rep. Schlegel has championed policies focused on education, literacy, mental health, crime prevention, and public safety. She is especially passionate about advancing laws that protect women and children. She led the passage of the Fairness in Women's Sports Act in her first few months in office and her landmark 2022 age verification law to protect minors from online pornography has been adopted in over 20 states and continues to gain momentum nationwide.



Terry Schilling

Terry serves as the president of American Principles Project, an advocacy organization focused on defending the family in both elections and legislation. Under his leadership, APP has become a leading voice in advancing age verification measures to protect minors online, positioning the group as a strong defender of family values. Schilling's commitment to safeguarding children from harmful online content is deeply personal. As a father of seven, he and his wife Katie navigate the challenges of raising in a digital age, which fuels his passion for ensuring that minors are shielded from inappropriate material on social media and the web.



Melissa McKay

Melissa is a Utah mother of five and a nationally recognized expert in child safety, online harms, and legislative strategy. She played a central role in drafting and passing Utah's App Store Accountability Act—the first law to hold app stores accountable for protecting young users through age verification and disclosure of app-related risks. She has also led national online safety campaigns, authored congressional testimony, and advised lawmakers on effective policy design. She is the founding chair of the Digital Childhood Alliance, a coalition of more than 100 organizations committed to protecting children in digital spaces.



Joseph Kohm III

Joseph serves as Director of Public Policy at Family Policy Alliance and Family Policy Alliance Foundation. He leads FPA's policy strategy, providing legal and legislative expertise to elected representatives working on laws that protect women's safety and opportunities, vulnerable children and families, parental rights, and born and unborn children. He has worked to facilitate the enactment of laws achieving these and other pro-family policy objectives. He works closely with FPA's network of more than 40 state Family Policy Councils (FPCs) and regularly hosts the House to Home podcast for family policy news.

What Can Be Done Outside of Washington, DC?



Clare Morell

Clare is a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, where she directs EPPC's Technology and Human Flourishing Project. Prior to joining EPPC, Ms. Morell worked in both the White House Counsel's Office and the Department of Justice, as well as in the private and non-profit sectors. She is also the author of *The Tech Exit: A Practical Guide to Freeing Kids and Teens from Smartphones*, published by Penguin Random House this June and her work has been featured in numerous media outlets. Morell frequently consults legislators on technology policy and has helped draft legislation to protect children online.



Matthew Mehan

Dr. Mehan is the Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Government for the Van Andel Graduate School of Government at Hillsdale College's Washington, D.C., location. He has been teaching and designing humanities curricula for 25 years. Dr. Mehan has consulted for national leaders and heads of state. He has written for various outlets both scholarly and popular, including *Moreana* and *The Wall Street Journal*. He is also the author of *The Handsome Little Cygnet* as well as *Mr. Mehan's Mildly Amusing Mythical Mammals*, an illustrated, best-selling book of poems. He is on the board of advisors for Hillsdale's K-12.
