



December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
U.S. Senate  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin  
U.S. Senate  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Grassley & Senator Durbin:

We are writing in strong support of [S.3397](#), the *Ending Coercion of Children and Harm Online (ECCHO)* Act, which would explicitly criminalize the intentional coercing of minors to physically harm themselves or others, including animals. We thank you for your leadership on this critical bill and appreciate your continued work on behalf of children across the nation.

The mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School took the lives of 20 precious first graders and 6 of their dedicated educators on December 14, 2012. Sandy Hook Promise is national nonprofit committed to educating and empowering youth and adults to keep children safe from all forms of violence. Through evidence-based violence-prevention programs, Sandy Hook Promise teaches students and adults how to recognize, intervene, and get help for individuals who may be socially isolated and/or at risk of hurting themselves or others. Sandy Hook Promise programs have reached 38 million youth and adults and averted multiple school shootings, suicides, and other violent threats across all 50 states.

As technology rapidly develops, so do the ways criminal actors inflict harm on our children. Online groups that encourage violence are one of the greatest threats adolescents face today. Violent predators befriend teenagers through popular online platforms and then coerce them into escalating sexual and violent behavior, often using coerced Child Sexual Abuse Material to control them. According to the FBI, youth struggling with mental health issues are especially targeted<sup>1</sup>. Threat actors weaponize the youth victim's vulnerable state of mind and groom their victims "by first establishing a trusting or romantic relationship before eventually manipulating and coercing them into engaging in escalating harmful behavior designed to shame and isolate them."<sup>2</sup> The FBI is currently investigating about 250 cases of violent online coercion<sup>3</sup>, but our current laws don't account for this new system of child abuse.

The *ECCHO Act* is a first-of-its-kind piece of legislation that serves as a long-needed response to reports of extremist groups pushing teens to livestream acts of violence or self-harm, including their own suicide or attacks on their community, including school shootings. In 2024, a Connecticut high school girl was coerced into sending bomb threats to her own school. The resulting police investigating found "pornographic photos of her, photos depicting self-mutilation, and photos of her paying homage to 764" on her electronic devices.<sup>4</sup> It is imperative that our laws develop alongside the technology and ever-growing landscape of online media. The *ECCHO Act* will allow prosecutors to hold these criminals

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<sup>1</sup> [Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\) | Violent Online Networks Target Vulnerable and Underage Populations Across the United States and Around the Globe](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\) | Violent Online Networks Target Vulnerable and Underage Populations Across the United States and Around the Globe](#)

<sup>3</sup> [FBI has opened 250 investigations tied to violent online network '764' that preys on teens, top official says - ABC News](#)

<sup>4</sup> [FBI has opened 250 investigations tied to violent online network '764' that preys on teens, top official says - ABC News](#)

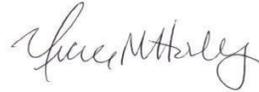
responsible, bring justice to the victims, and deter future heinous crimes from occurring. Sandy Hook Promise is proud to support this life-saving legislation.

Thank you for your commitment to protecting our children, their families, and our communities. Together, we can prevent violence and save lives.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mark Barden in cursive script.

Mark Barden, Daniel's father  
Co-Founder, Sandy Hook Promise

Handwritten signature of Nicole Hockley in cursive script.

Nicole Hockley, Dylan's mother  
Co-Founder & CEO, Sandy Hook Promise