

United States Senate

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
FINANCE
JOINT ECONOMIC
JUDICIARY
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

June 12, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Michael Heyward
CEO & Co-Founder
MediaLab
Santa Monica, CA

Dear Mr. Heyward:

I write today with great concern regarding the National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE)'s recent report warning that Kik remains incredibly dangerous for consumers—specifically children. Kik has followed a similar playbook as other social media companies: promise safety by design while simultaneously turning a blind eye to—or *even allowing*—the exploitation and abuse of minors. This conduct is disgusting and must immediately come to a stop.

After Kik was first exposed for years of rampant child abuse and sexual exploitation on the platform, your platform purported to implement several of NCOSE's recommendations to improve safety on the app.¹ According to Bark, a parental controls company, however, Kik has been either the first or second most reported app for children's exposure to severe sexual content for the past five years.² In NCOSE's report, researchers registered a profile under the username "Im12BeNice," indicating the user was 12 years old.³ According to the report, the account was almost immediately inundated with unsolicited sexual messages, requests for sexual conversations, and nude images from adult users. The strangers' messages were unconscionable and sexually explicit. The account also received multiple nude photos. Rather than preventing predatory contact with a user who openly presented as a child, Kik's systems allegedly allowed adults to discover, contact, and send explicit content to the account within minutes.

The results of this investigation, while disturbing, are not shocking. Kik's policies are *designed* to allow this kind of predatory behavior. Kik purports to be an 18+ platform, meaning it feels no need to implement parental controls—and it lacks age verification. The app still allows kids to connect with strangers through a rebranded stranger-connection tool—Kik-it—which puts users in private chats with strangers. Further, Kik's sexual content filters did not work in NCOSE's investigation. In fact, the fake minor's account had the explicit content filter on when they received each of the sexually explicit messages and nude photos.

¹ Lily Moric, *Kik's Safety Changes Fall Flat; Still A Predator's Paradise*, NATIONAL CENTER ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (June 4, 2026), <https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/kiks-safety-changes-fall-flat-still-a-predators-paradise/>.

² *Bark's Annual Report*, BARK, <https://www.bark.us/annual-report/> (last visited June 10, 2026).

³ Moric, *supra* note 1.

This investigation is not hypothetical. On May 20, 2026, a repeat sexual predator was sentenced to 15 years in prison after sharing child sexual abuse material (CSAM) on Kik, including CSAM of infants and toddlers.⁴ Also on May 20, a man pled guilty to forcing a child to self-produce CSAM on Kik.⁵ In March, a former teacher was arrested for uploading CSAM to Kik depicting children being abused by grown men and even animals.⁶ Children are being abused on your platform, and it appears you are doing little to stop it.

To that end, please respond to the following questions **by 5:00 PM on June 19, 2026:**

1. Kik represents itself as an 18-and-over platform. What specific measures does Kik employ to verify that users are at least 18 years old before creating an account?
 - a. What percentage of Kik accounts have undergone any form of age verification?
 - b. How many accounts have been removed in the last five years for being operated by users under the age of 18?
2. What safeguards on your platform currently prevent adults from contacting users who present themselves as minors?
3. How many reports has Kik received in the past five years involving adults initiating sexual conversations with suspected minors?
4. What risk assessments did Kik conduct before launching Kik-it, Kik's stranger-connection tool?
5. What percentage of reports involving child sexual exploitation originate from stranger-matching or random-chat functionalities?
6. NCOSE reported that sexually explicit messages and nude images were delivered despite the recipient account having explicit-content filters enabled. Why did these filters fail?
7. How many reports has Kik submitted to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) CyberTipline during each of the last five years?

⁴ *Repeat Sex Offender to Spend 15 Years in Federal Prison for Trading Child Sexual Abuse Material Online*, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, (May 20, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdin/pr/repeat-sex-offender-spend-15-years-federal-prison-trading-child-sexual-abuse-material>.

⁵ *Coos Bay Man Pleads Guilty to Sexually Exploiting a Minor and Attempting to Sexually Exploit Another Minor*, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, (May 20, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-or/pr/coos-bay-man-pleads-guilty-sexually-exploiting-minor-and-attempting-sexually-exploit>.

⁶ Jordan Davidson, *Former Nanaimo teacher jailed for possession of child exploitation material*, NANAIMONEWSNOW, (Mar. 31, 2026), <https://nanaimonewsnow.com/2026/03/31/former-nanaimo-teacher-jailed-for-possession-of-child-exploitation-material/>.

8. How many accounts were terminated for CSAM-related violations during each of the last five years?
9. How many reports of child exploitation, grooming, solicitation, or sexual abuse has Kik received annually over the last five years?
 - a. What percentage of such reports result in account suspension or termination?
 - b. Will Kik commit to publishing regular transparency reports detailing child safety incidents, enforcement actions, and response times?
10. Please produce all documents and communications from January 1, 2020, to the present relating to:
 - a. Kik's age-verification or age-assurance policies and any internal evaluations of such measures;
 - b. the design, operation, and safety assessments of Kik-it and any other features that facilitate contact between users who do not know one another;
 - c. the effectiveness, testing, and limitations of Kik's sexual-content filters and moderation systems, including any analyses of their ability to prevent minors from receiving sexually explicit messages or images;
 - d. reports, investigations, or analyses concerning the sexual exploitation, grooming, solicitation, or abuse of minors on Kik; and
 - e. Kik's review of, response to, or communications regarding the National Center on Sexual Exploitation's recent investigation and report.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
Chairman
Subcommittee on
Privacy, Technology, and the Law
Senate Judiciary Committee