



Not for the Swift

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What if Rand Paul hadn't been in the U.S. Senate?

For several years now, [reports](#) *Reclaim the Net*, lawmakers have been trying to pass legislation to require Americans to provide ID to do many of things on the Internet we can now do anonymously. In 2024, the bill — with the cuddly name of [Kids Online Safety Act](#), it prompts us to ask, *what brute would want kids to be unsafe online?* — passed in the Senate but failed in the House. *The Hill* [reports](#) that “concerns over

ensorship and freedom of speech prevented it from ever hitting the House floor.”

The Senate bill doesn't mandate age verification directly. But it does require the FTC, in assessing whether a platform has complied with “duty of care” requirements, to determine “whether a reasonable and prudent person under the circumstances would have known that the user is a minor.”

How could platforms avoid liability for sure without imposing some kind of ID verification on all users?

In a fourth attempt rushing the Act through, senators from both parties, last week, sought to get it passed by unanimous consent. Last Wednesday, the objection of one senator, Kentucky's Rand Paul, prevented this.

The Act will still probably pass the Senate. Maybe it will be blocked in the House. But speed is on the side of those who are eager to sidestep examination and reflection. It may be the case that, with the help of Sen. Paul's slow-down, friends of privacy and freedom of speech will get another reprieve.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.