

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 30, 2026

Mr. Tim Cook
Chief Executive Officer
Apple
One Apple Park Way
Cupertino, California 95014

Dear Mr. Cook:

I write with concern about the adequacy and reliability of Apple App Store age ratings. Incorrect age ratings can pose dangers to minors by facilitating minors' use of apps that enable communication with online predators or provide access to inappropriate sexual content or other harmful material.¹ Child safety advocates have raised serious concerns that app store ratings may give parents a false sense of security and encourage minors to access content that many families reasonably expect to be restricted.²

Research suggests that some apps are wrongly rated as appropriate for young ages in the App Store, while others' age ratings go unexplained. According to the Wall Street Journal, in one 24-hour period at the end of 2024, researchers identified "about 200 apps with inappropriate content that were rated for children"—including apps that provided access to anonymous chat functions easily used by predators and apps providing access to violent or sexualized games.³ In early 2024, another expert group reported that YouTube's age rating in the Apple App Store was quietly downgraded from 17+ to 12+ without clear justification, disrupting parental controls for families relying on the 17+ block to restrict access.⁴

Given Apple's gatekeeping role at the point of download, it is critical that App Store age ratings, disclosures, and default protections function in a manner that parents and guardians understand and that is aligned with real-world risks.

¹ Canadian Centre for Child Protection, *Reviewing the Enforcement*, 2022.

² *Protecting Innocence in a Digital World* | United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Senate.gov, July 9, 2019, <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/committee-activity/hearings/protecting-innocence-in-a-digital-world>; Christopher Makenna, *Senate Committee on the Judiciary 'Protecting Innocence in a Digital World' Testimony of Christopher (Chris) McKenna Founder and CEO, Protect Young Eyes*, U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, July 9, 2019, <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/McKenna%20Testimony.pdf>.

³ Aaron Tilley, *Apple's App Store Puts Kids a Click Away From a Slew of Inappropriate Apps*, WALL ST. J. (Dec. 22, 2024), https://www.wsj.com/tech/apples-app-store-puts-kids-a-click-away-from-a-slew-of-inappropriate-apps-dfde01d5?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=AWetsqfsKuiZFBqI_GNIK0-eSOtd3l5IsnBmuwp5P4-DrIKncd3p9LqLE3harKTdcKo%3D&gaa_ts=697d261d&gaa_sig=qtLebdTI01YTigus0zk2SaNQpESer6_2-Du7sFpPldjV20Wnw21QBHlwff7sKyhoDK4zlDXrTeT5iVZLyx9QIQ%3D%3D.

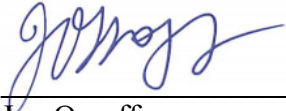
⁴ The Ultimate Guide to Youtube for Cargivers, *Protect Young Eyes* (May 2, 2024), <https://www.protectyouneyes.com/blog-articles/the-ultimate-guide-to-youtube-for-caregivers>; Digital Childhood Institute, *FTC Complaint Against Apple* at 6 (August 19, 2025) https://www.digitalchildhoodinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FTC-Complaint-Against-Apple_25.pdf.

To better understand Apple's policies and enforcement, I request a response to the following questions by August 21, 2026:

1. Please describe Apple's process for assigning and approving App Store age ratings and content descriptors, including the role of developer self-reporting and review.
2. Please describe Apple's process for changing an app's age rating after it has been listed.
 - a. What criteria trigger a review or re-rating?
 - b. What internal approvals are required?
3. How does Apple evaluate the impact of a rating change on families relying on Screen Time or other parental controls?
4. Please describe the basis and process for the reported change of YouTube's App Store age rating from 17+ to 12+.
5. How are minimum age limits identified in an app's terms of service factored into App Store age ratings? What policies and procedures does Apple have in place to address identified disparities between the minimum age limit identified in an app's terms of service and the app's App Store age rating?
6. For large platforms that are widely used by minors but contain risk of sexual content, exploitation, or adult interactions, what additional review, labeling, and enforcement steps does Apple take to ensure that age ratings and content descriptors reflect real-world exposure?
7. What mechanisms exist for parents, users, schools and advocates to report inaccurate age ratings or age-gating failures?
 - a. How many such reports did Apple receive through these mechanisms in the past year, and what actions were taken in response?
8. How many Apple personnel are dedicated to age rating integrity, enforcement, and investigations related to minors' safety on the App Store?
9. What performance metrics does Apple use to evaluate whether age ratings and parental controls are functioning as intended?
10. In early 2026, Apple implemented updated age ratings for apps, what metrics does Apple use to evaluate the outcomes of this new policy?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jon Ossoff', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Jon Ossoff
United States Senator