

Congress might try to force Facebook to change its newsfeed algorithm



Social media platforms curate what users can see on their newsfeed through a unique algorithm, and lawmakers are attempting to reign in how those algorithms are formulated in an effort to make them less addictive and harmful.

Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.) [introduced legislation](#) this week titled “Nudging Users to Drive Good Experiences on Social Media,” or the NUDGE Act. It aims to authorize the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to identify interventions that could reduce the harm algorithms cause.

Facebook’s algorithm came under national scrutiny last year after

whistleblower Frances Haugen, a former product manager there, [testified on Capitol Hill](#), saying the company's decisions when it comes to its algorithms "are a huge problem — for children, for public safety, for democracy."

Lawmakers are trying to do something about it, with Klobuchar [putting out a statement](#) that said social media platforms have repeatedly put profits over people and that algorithms have pushed dangerous content that hooks users and spreads misinformation.

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Through the NUDGE Act, the National Science Foundation and the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine would study how social media establishes addiction, which could help the public understand the impact of how social media is designed.

"From there we can build guardrails to protect children in Wyoming from the negative effects of social media. We can build a healthier internet without the federal government dictating what people can and can't say," said Lummis in a statement.

After research is conducted, the FTC could conduct rule-making to decide how to apply the findings to social media platforms, requiring them to implement changes while also publicly disclosing information about their compliance.

A recent [poll by the Washington Post-Schar School](#) found that 72 percent of respondents said they distrust Facebook, while 60 percent also said they didn't trust Instagram, another Meta-owned company.

Other social media companies were also targeted, with 63 percent of respondents saying they distrust video-sharing app TikTok with their data. Another 40 percent saying they don't trust national e-retailers Amazon and Apple.

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