

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2026

Senate Majority Leader John Thune  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Speaker Mike Johnson  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Democratic Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and Democratic Leader Jeffries,

Across the country, millions of children have profiles on the same social media platforms as any adult anywhere in the world. Adults know that these children are vulnerable, and they are taking advantage. One of these children was James T. Woods, a 17 year-old from Streetsboro, Ohio who was known by neighbors, friends, and family as a joyful, compassionate, and talented child full of potential. Congress cannot wait any longer to act, and I urge you to expand protections for children and hold abusers accountable by bringing H.R.6719, the *James T. Woods Act* to the floor for a vote as soon as possible.

Like 95 percent of kids his age, James T. Woods was on social media. On the platform Instagram, he befriended a profile of a woman who groomed him, convinced him to send her nude photos, and quickly used sextortion, coercion, and threats to drive him to suicide. For 20 hours, James faced threatening messages on the Instagram platform, including the message “you should just kill yourself,” as the abusers coerced James into sending them money using while blackmailing him using nude photos, also known as sextortion. In the absence of adequate protections on social media platforms and without clear legal consequences for coercing children online, no one intervened and the abusers believed they could get away with it.

Our children should not be left unprotected and James T. Woods should still be with us today. Congress must act to hold those responsible for this abuse accountable, and H.R.6719, the *James T. Woods Act* is a critical step in the right direction. This bill would update sentencing guidelines related to child sex abuse material to include offenders that use technology to conceal their identity. It also creates a new crime that prohibits individuals from coercing children into harming themselves or others, with a penalty of up to life in prison, and increases the maximum penalty for sextortion.

These updated reforms are long overdue, and will bring families impacted by these crimes one step closer to justice. Congress cannot wait any longer, I urge you to bring the H.R.6719, the *James T. Woods Act* to the floor for a vote.

Sincerely,



Emilia Strong Sykes  
Member of Congress