



## **Announcement: February 10, 2024, Vancouver, BC - Women CyberSecurity Society Supports Bill S-210 to Protect Children Online**

The Women CyberSecurity Society (WCS2), a Canadian nonprofit dedicated to advancing gender equality in the security and tech sector, is thrilled to announce our collaboration with the National Council of Women of Canada in supporting Bill S-210—an essential legislative measure aimed at safeguarding children from online pornography.

At WCS2, we advocate for women's and girls' empowerment in the digital sphere and for their safety and protection online. Hence, we are proud to have contributed to developing an Open Letter endorsing Bill S-210. Under the guidance of our esteemed founder, Lisa Kearney, we conducted extensive research, compiled crucial findings, and built online platforms in English and French to facilitate organizational signatures supporting this essential bill.

[Bill S-210](#) proposes the implementation of an 'age verification system' akin to those used in tobacco, alcohol, and gambling websites. This measure is vital in ensuring that individuals accessing online content are of legal age, mitigating the risks associated with underage exposure to harmful materials.

### **Who Should Sign the Open Letter**

We call upon organizations from various sectors, including:

1. **Tech Industry:** Companies involved in internet services, social media platforms, and online content distribution.
2. **Education:** Schools, universities, and institutions concerned with child welfare and online safety.
3. **Healthcare:** Healthcare providers and organizations addressing children's mental and emotional well-being.
4. **Nonprofit and Advocacy Groups:** Organizations dedicated to child protection, digital rights, and gender equality.

### **Why Should You Sign**

1. **Protecting Children:** Bill S-210 proposes the implementation of an age verification system to prevent underage access to online pornography, safeguarding the mental and emotional well-being of children and adolescents.
2. **Promoting Digital Safety:** Supporting this bill aligns with your commitment to creating a safer online environment for all users, especially vulnerable populations such as children.
3. **Upholding Legal and Ethical Standards:** Implementing age verification mechanisms parallels existing regulations in industries like tobacco, alcohol, and gambling, ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards.

4. **Advancing Gender Equality:** By endorsing this initiative, you contribute to our shared goal of gender equality in the security and tech sector, prioritizing the safety and protection of women and girls online.

**How to Sign:** Organizations interested in endorsing Bill S-210 and supporting this initiative can sign the Open Letter via the following link: [Open Letter to Support Bill S-210](#).

Moreover, we are excited to share our active engagement as a Canadian delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women for two consecutive years. In 2024, we are honoured to represent our nation again, advocating for the rights and inclusion of women and underrepresented groups globally.

Let's create a safer and more equitable digital environment for all. Join us in championing the protection of children online and promoting gender equality in cybersecurity and beyond.

For further details, visit the provided link or contact us directly using an online [Contact Form](#) or email us at [contact@womencybersecuritysociety.org](mailto:contact@womencybersecuritysociety.org).

Thank you for your support and commitment to this vital cause.

Warm regards,

## **Women CyberSecurity Society (WCS2)**

### **About the Women CyberSecurity Society**

WCS2 is a Canadian nonprofit advancing gender equality in security and technology. Lisa Kearney founded the organization to empower women throughout the lifecycle of their careers and advocate for online safety, supporting Bill S-210 to protect children. Join us to shape a secure, inclusive digital future for all.

Ms. Kearney states, "At the Women Cybersecurity Society, we recognize that protecting our children online is not just a matter of safeguarding their innocence—it's a fundamental imperative for ensuring their safety, well-being, and future opportunities. By supporting Bill S-210, we are not only advocating for the implementation of crucial protective measures such as 'age verification systems' but also reaffirming our commitment to creating a digital environment where children can explore, learn, and grow without fear or exploitation."

### **About the National Council of Women of Canada**

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) is a leading Canadian organization advocating for women's rights and gender equality since 1893. They champion policy changes, empower women, and address critical issues in Canadian society and internationally. Join them in shaping a more equitable society for all and protecting children's safety online.

## **Background of Bill S-210**

Bill S-210, *the Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act*, is a Senate public bill that aims to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material. The bill would make it an offense for organizations to make pornography available to anyone under 18 for commercial purposes. It would also empower a designated authority to take steps to prevent such material from being accessible to young persons in Canada.

The bill was introduced by Senator Julie Miville-Dechêne on November 24, 2021, and passed the Senate on April 18, 2023, after being studied and amended by the Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. The bill was then sent to the House of Commons, where it was sponsored by MP Karen Vecchio. The bill passed the second reading in the House on December 13, 2023, with the support of all parties except the NDP, which abstained. The bill was then referred to the **Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security (SECU)** for further consideration.