The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
521 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2026

Re: Pass the Disrupt Explicit Forged Images and Non-Consensual Edits (DEFIANCE) Act

Dear Speaker Mike Johnson,

Across the country, thousands of women and children have been targeted with AI-generated deepfake pornography.[1] I became a victim three years ago. The perpetrator targeted my job and my social media accounts with explicit photos that looked just like me. This was very traumatic and expensive, as I had to increase our staffing to search through posts with me and report them each individually.

I cannot get justice until the Disrupt Explicit Forged Images and Non-Consensual Edits (DEFIANCE) Act passes. I am not alone. Thousands of survivors have called on Congress to pass the DEFIANCE Act for this very reason. Now, I speak to you as a victim of deepfake pornography, as an expert in digital sexual violence, as the Founder and CEO of the Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA),[2] as a representative of the 34 organizations that signed onto this letter, and as a voice for thousands of survivors across the country to say: pass the DEFIANCE Act.[3]

The DEFIANCE Act is a bipartisan bill addressing the growing crisis of artificially-generated nonconsensual explicit material (NCEM), commonly known as deepfake pornography.[4]
It creates a civil right of action empowering victims to seek justice against perpetrators who create, share, publish, solicit, or threaten to distribute artificially-generated explicit content

[1] Conor Lennon, "From deepfakes to grooming: UN warns of escalating AI threats to children," United Nations News, January 26, 2026. https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/01/1166827
[2] Sexual Violence Prevention Association. "Preventing sexual violence systemically." https://s-v-p-a.org/
[3] Congress.gov. "H.R.3562 - 119th Congress (2025-2026): DEFIANCE Act of 2025." May 21, 2025. https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/3562.
[4] The term "deepfake pornography" is not the language written in the DEFIANCE Act. It is a colloquial term, used in this letter for ease-of-understanding. Most survivors and field experts agree, the terms "artificially-generated nonconsensual explicit material (NCEM)," and "intimate digital forgery," are preferable. "Intimate digital forgery," is the language used in the bill text.

without consent. It covers both adults and children, building on existing protections established under the Violence Against Women Act[5] and the Take It Down Act.[6]

Nonconsensual deepfake pornography is sexual violence. It is a violation of the victim's consent, privacy, and autonomy. It causes lasting psychological harm and real-world consequences such as job loss or reputational damage.[7] It also causes a severe increased risk of stalking, abuse, and further violence.[8]

The urgency of this issue cannot be overstated. Deepfake pornography is the fastest inceasing form of sexual violence, more than doubling every six months.[9] Research indicates that over 98 percent of deepfakes found online are pornographic or explicit.[10] The five most popular deepfake websites alone receive over 25 million visits monthly.[11] Women and children are the most common targets. A UNICEF, ECPAT and INTERPOL study found that at least 1.2 million children disclosed their images were manipulated into sexually explicit deepfakes in the past year alone.[12]

Despite its alarming prevalence, **there are currently no federal laws allowing victims to sue perpetrators of deepfake pornography.** Without a civil right of action, perpetrators are emboldened by the lack of consequences. There is a patchwork of state laws, but they vary considerably and often fail to address all types of deepfake abuse. Further, many cases happen across state lines, leading to jurisdictional issues. Victims across the United States deserve the same protections.

You and your colleagues in Congress have passed crucial legislation addressing digital sexual violence. The Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1996 criminalized computer-generated pornography of children.[13] The SHIELD Act of 2021 provided victims of revenge pornography a

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[5] 103d Congress. "PUBLIC LAW 103-322–SEPT. 13, 1994," September 13, 1994. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-108/pdf/STATUTE-108-Pg1796.pdf
[6] Congress.gov. "S.146 - 119th Congress (2025-2026): TAKE IT DOWN Act." May 19, 2025. https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/146.
[7] Halle Nelson, "Taylor Swift and the Dangers of Deepfake Pornography," February 7, 2024. National Sexual Violence Resource Center. https://www.nsvrc.org/blog_post/taylor-swift-and-dangers-deepfake-pornography/
[8] Laura Barrón-López, et al., "Women face new sexual harassment with deepfake pornography," June 27, 2023. PBS News Hour. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/women-face-new-sexual-harassment-with-deepfake-pornography
[9] Vilius Petkauskas, "Report: Number of Expert-Crafted Video Deepfakes Double Every Six Months," Cybernews, January 7, 2021, https://cybernews.com/privacy/report-number-of-expert-crafted-video-deepfakes-double-every-six-months
[10] Security Hero, 2023 State of Deepfakes: Realities, Threats, and Impact (2023), https://www.securityhero.io/state-of-deepfakes/
[11] D'Anastasio, Cecilia, and Davey Alba. n.d. "Google, Microsoft Tools Behind Surge in Deepfake AI Porn." Bloomberg. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-08-24/google-microsoft-tools-behind-surge-in-deepfake-ai-porn?embedded-checkout=true.
[12] UNICEF. "'Deepfake abuse is abuse': Statement by UNICEF on AI-generated sexualised images of children," February 4, 2026. https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/deepfake-abuse-is-abuse
[13] Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-208, div. A, tit. I, § 101(a) [tit. I, § 121], 110 Stat. 3009-26 (1996).

civil right to action.[14] The Take It Down Act of 2025 provided a criminal right of action for victims of revenge pornography and deepfake pornography.[15]

Victims of "authentically"-created NCEM, also known as revenge pornography, have a civil right of action. Why are victims of deepfake pornography left without recourse?

There is a criminal right of action for deepfake pornography. Why are victims left without a civil right of action?

The DEFIANCE Act and the Take It Down Act were written to work together to address deepfake pornography. The Take It Down Act requires tech companies to establish report-and-remove systems. It also criminalizes the publication of NCEM, such as content posted on social media or porn sites, or the threat of publication.

However, the Take It Down Act does not address private sharing, such as deepfake pornography that is sent in group chats, to family, friends, or employers. Nor does it address the very creation of deepfake pornography. This a gaping hole in federal legislation primarily hurting young women and children.

Further, the Take It Down Act does not provide civil remedy. Most victims have no way to seek compensation for their financial, reputational, and emotional losses. In rare instances, a district attorney could bring a successful criminal case but that is outside the victim's control and far more difficult to win than a civil case. The Take It Down Act was signed into law more than a year ago and less than 5 cases have been filed to date. Even fewer have been successful.

The DEFIANCE Act will address these gaps. It provides a civil right of action, allowing victims to sue perpetrators directly. This empowers victims, not prosecutors, to decide when and how to pursue justice. Further, the DEFIANCE Act covers the creation, distribution, solicitation, publication, and threat of deepfake pornography. This means it covers perpetrators who share these harmful materials publicly or privately, such as to the victim's employer, family, or friends.

In short, the Take It Down Act created a criminal right of action for prosecutors to charge a perpetrator who published deepfake pornography. The DEFIANCE Act will create a civil right of action for victims to sue a perpetrator who created, published, or privately shared deepfake pornoraphy.

The massive gaps in existing legislation for civil liability, deepfake creation, and non-public distribution have driven many to support the DEFIANCE Act. Paris Hilton endorsed it, joining

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[14] Stopping Harmful Image Exploitation and Limiting Distribution (SHIELD) Act of 2021, H.R. 1620, 117th Cong. § 1411 (2021).
[15] Tools to Address Known Exploitation by Immobilizing Technological Deepfakes on Websites and Networks Act (TAKE IT DOWN Act), Pub. L. No. 119-12, 139 Stat. 55 (2025).

Representatives Laurel Lee and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez at the Capitol.[16] She's continued her advocacy on Twitter[17] (she even tweeted at you!)[18] and spoke about it with Jimmy Fallen on The Tonight Show.[19] Big Tech companies and tech-safety advocates alike, including OpenAI,[20] Microsoft, Snap (SnapChat), Mozilla (Firefox), the Center of Democracy and Technology, and Encode AI have all endorsed the DEFIANCE Act.[21] Archewell Philanthropies,[22] the foundation led by Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, and Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex, announced public support for the DEFIANCE Act, urging House passage.[23]

The entire Senate supported the DEFIANCE Act, twice! It passed via unanimous consent last Congress and again in January of this year.[24] The bipartisan, bicameral Problem Solvers Caucus endorsed the bill a few months later.[25] Seventy House members have sponsored the DEFIANCE Act, perfectly balanced with thirty-five Democrats and thirty-five Republicans.[26]

I wrote the DEFIANCE Act three years ago. Through the help of Senator Lindsey Graham, may he rest in peace, and Senator Dick Durbin as well as Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Representative Laurel Lee, the DEFIANCE Act has been sufficiently polished into a strong bill that will protect survivors.

The entire Senate, seventy Representatives, influential figures, Big Tech, advocacy orgs, survivors, and the public all want you to pass the DEFIANCE Act. You have even spoken in favor of the DEFIANCE Act several times, stating, "Well, I'm certainly in favor of it,"[27] and "I'm obviously in favor of that."[28]

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[16] Sexual Violence Prevention Association. "DEFIANCE Act Gains Momentum Following Press Conference with Reps. Ocasio-Cortez, Lee, and Paris Hilton," January 22, 2026. https://s-v-p-a.org/defiance-act-gains-momentum/
[17] Paris Hilton (@ParisHilton), "I've loved working with you on such important legislation @SteveScalise and I'm looking forward to getting the #DEFIANCEAct passed through the House swiftly," X, July 22, 2026, https://x.com/ParisHilton/status/2079987700967542968
[18] Paris Hilton (@ParisHilton), "I'm proud to support @RepLaurelLee @AOC's #DEFIANCEAct to provide victims of explicit deepfakes access to justice," X, July 22, 2026, https://x.com/ParisHilton/status/2079987508860064068
[19] The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon and Jimmy Fallon. "Paris Hilton Helped Pass Legislation in D.C.; Talks 20 Years of "Stars Are Blind" and Motherhood." YouTube video, 8:49. January 27, 2026. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjGL6pGAIBA
[20] U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary. "Durbin, Graham Announce First Artificial Intelligence Company Endorsement Of DEFIANCE Act," June 24, 2026. https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/press/dem/releases/durbin-graham-announce-first-artificial-intelligence-company-endorsement-of-defiance-act
[21] Sexual Violence Prevention Association, "DEFIANCE Act Endorsements Surge to 86 Organizations Amidst Industry Letters to Congress," December 5, 2024, https://s-v-p-a.org/86-defiance-endorsements/
[22] The Office of Prince Harry & Meghan Duke & Duchess of Sussex. "Can we all agree technology should not enable predators to target children?," August, 2026. https://sussex.com/can-we-all-agree-technology-should-not-enable-predators-to-target-children/
[23] The Office of Prince Harry & Meghan Duke & Duchess of Sussex. August, 2026.
[24] Sexual Violence Prevention Association, "DEFIANCE Act Gains Momentum." January 22, 2026.
[25] Problem Solvers Caucus, "Problem Solvers Caucus Endorses Bipartisan DEFIANCE Act," U.S. House of Representatives, July 23, 2026, Problem Solvers Caucus.
[26] U.S. Congress, "H.R. 3562—DEFIANCE Act of 2025: Cosponsors," 119th Cong., Congress.gov, accessed August 25, 2026, Congress.gov.
[27] Eric Michael Garcia (@EricMGarcia), "Forgot to post this yesterday, Johnson came out in support of legislation to ban deepfake AI porn like on Grok," X, January 14, 2026, X post.
[28] Acyn (@Acyn), "PabloReports: Do you think the Defiance Act on deepfakes will make it to the floor? It passed in January by unanimous consent in the Senate. Mike Johnson: I don't know. I'm obviously in favor of that. We'll have to see," X, July 21, 2026, X post.

I urge you to bring the DEFIANCE Act to the House floor for consideration under suspension of the rules.

The DEFIANCE Act has no threat to free speech– this bill is very narrowly focused, providing a civil right of action for conduct already criminalized by the Take It Down Act. There is no burden for Big Tech– this bill directly targets individuals and is endorsed by companies leading AI innovation. There is no party ownership– the DEFIANCE Act has always been bipartisan.

We worked with your office on the Take It Down Act and it was immediately clear that **you are dedicated to helping victims and protecting women and children from digital sexual violence. Please build on your legacy by passing the DEFIANCE Act.**

Sincerely,
Omny Miranda Martone
Founder and CEO, Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA)

Led by:

1. Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA)
2. National Women's Law Center
3. Gender Equity Coalition (GEC)
4. UltraViolet Action

Joined By:

5. 11:11 Media
6. All Girls Allowed
7. Alternative Solutions
8. Bondage2Freedom Inc.
9. Breaking Generational Cycles
10. Chains Interrupted
11. Digital Childhood Institute
12. Equality Now
13. Exodus Cry
14. General Federation of Women's Clubs
15. Global Hope 365
16. HMS - Have More Safety

17. Joyful Heart Foundation
18. Just Love Worldwide
19. Less than 3
20. National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE)
21. National Organization for Women
22. New Friends New Life
23. New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking
24. New Hampshire Traffick-Free Coalition
25. Paving the Way Foundation
26. Resiliency Foundation
27. Rights4Girls
28. Sacred Stewardship
29. Safe Horizon
30. The Empowered Child Alliance Inc
31. The Stop Trafficking Project
32. Thorn
33. Unbound Now
34. Wealth Management Ministries- Prevention Works Joint Task Force and Coalition
35. World Without Exploitation