



The big debate

Should the US ban social media for teens?

Some people say a full ban isn't the right way to approach a growing problem.

What you need to know

- In a survey of 11-, 13-, and 15-year-olds in 44 countries, the World Health Organization found that 36% were in constant contact with friends online.
- A Pew Research Center survey of 13- to 17-year-olds found that 92% used YouTube, 68% used TikTok, and 63% used Instagram.
- Nearly 50% of Americans ages 30 and up support full school phone bans.
- Users must be 13 to use most social media platforms. But in a survey, 38% of kids 8 to 12 reported using them.



In December 2025, Australia became the first country in the world to ban social media for people under the age of 16. Since then, several other countries, including Turkey, Spain, and the United Arab Emirates, have implemented bans for teens, while more than a dozen others, including the US, are debating similar moves. Some state and local governments in the US are doing the same, and about 35 states currently ban or limit cellphones in schools. There's strong support for this movement, but many people say a better solution is to make the platforms safer for young people instead. What do you think? Should the US ban social media for teens?

Yes—it's too risky

The scientific evidence is undeniable: Social media can harm teens. It's designed to be addictive, with functions like infinite scroll and autoplay keeping people glued to their screens. Young people are especially vulnerable because their brains are still developing. Studies have shown that social media triggers certain hormones in teens' brains and interferes with sleep and overall physical and mental health. Entire countries are banning social media for kids, and in 2023 the US Surgeon General issued an advisory on the dangers. In 2025, one in five teens said social media harms their mental health. It's time to take this seriously.

No—it's not realistic

Tens of millions of teenagers use social media regularly. How could the government get them all to close their accounts? That's not working in Australia, where a study found that most teens were still online six months after the ban. Instead, tech companies should put stricter safeguards in place to protect teens and educate them about the negative effects of social media. This would let them feel like they're part of the conversation about their own lives. It would also preserve an important outlet. About 58% of teens say they have found community and acceptance on social media. Don't take that away from them.

YES

Three reasons the US should ban social media for teens

- 1 Social media is purposely designed to be addictive, with hard-to-resist features that keep people scrolling.
- 2 Teenagers' brains are still developing, and studies have shown that social media harms their health.
- 3 So many countries, experts, and people support a ban that it's time to take action.

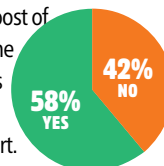
NO

Three reasons the US should not ban social media for teens

- 1 The government can't make millions of teens get off social media.
- 2 Tech companies should be responsible for making the platforms safe for teenagers and educating them about the risks.
- 3 Social media is an important outlet for many teens who find community and acceptance online.

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if breakfast is the most important meal. More than half of you said yes, a boost of nutrition in the morning gets your day off to a great start.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote **YES** if you think the US should ban social media for teens or **NO** if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.