



JCCP REPORTER FAQ TALKING POINTS

General Messaging

The following messages may be helpful to weave into interview answers.

- **Big Tech designs addictive products targeting our kids, trapping them online more than any other generation and exposing them to danger, predatory exploitation, and self-harm.** What began as a tool for connection has been weaponized by Big Tech, acting on greed at the cost of our kids' lives. These companies depend on keeping children hooked, and the harm isn't just collateral—it's profitable.
- **For Big Tech, creating addictive products is critical to their business model, even if it costs children their lives or puts them in harm's way.** By designing platforms built for constant engagement with no regard for well-being, these companies trap children in unsafe environments. Kids today can't imagine life without social media—and that's the point. We've seen this before with Big Tobacco: addict them young to create lifelong consumers from those who survive.
- **Protecting our children online is the fight of our time. What happens here matters.** Big Tech has lied for too long, but now they will face a jury of everyday Americans after thousands of survivors, families, schools, and state and local leaders have taken them to task. This is a cause that unites parents and families across every divide. It's not about politics—it's about Big Tech stealing our children's lives, and all of us saying enough is enough. The solution is simple: hold companies accountable, force them to fix their harmful product, and don't accept an apology as enough.

Case-specific questions

What is this trial about?

- The trial that begins on January 27th is the first of over 1,000 related California state cases alleging that social media companies knowingly designed addictive products that expose kids to danger, predatory exploitation, and self-harm.
- The Big Tech social media addiction lawsuits are considered the most significant social media accountability litigation to date, drawing parallels to landmark product liability cases against Big Tobacco. We've seen Big Tech's strategy before with other sectors: addict them young to create lifelong consumers from those who survive.
- These lawsuits are an opportunity for us to pull back the curtain and learn what companies have known for years: their products cost kids' their lives.

Who are the key players in these cases? Who are the plaintiffs and defendants?

- There are over 1,600 plaintiffs in the social media addiction lawsuits, representing over 350 families and 250 school districts. These plaintiffs have seen firsthand how social media platforms trap children, expose them to sexual predators, and amplify depression by flooding their pages with dark, isolating, and even suicidal content.
- The defendants in these cases are some of the most profitable companies in history—Meta, Snapchat, TikTok, and Alphabet. These companies depend on keeping children hooked on their products, and the harm they cause isn't just collateral—it's profitable.

What are the plaintiffs alleging?

- The plaintiffs are arguing that social media companies knowingly designed addictive products that harm kids and must be held accountable for those choices.
 - Social media has become a machine designed to keep kids hooked, tracked, and exploited. Social media companies deliberately design their products to keep kids on the platform as long as possible with features like infinite scroll and autoplay.
 - These platforms also push the most captivating content, even if it's highly dangerous. That can range from sexual predators to pro-suicide content, drugs, and abuse.
 - We know that Big Tech was aware of the harm they were causing to kids—some as young as five years old—but continued to do so anyway. Internal documents and depositions reveal that executives were repeatedly warned about harms to young users but still decided to prioritize their business model over kids' lives.
 - Big Tech needs to be held liable for design choices that profoundly hurt kids, just as Big Tobacco faced consequences for its harmful products. One of the goals of this litigation is to force meaningful design changes and establish industry-wide safety guardrails.

What are the defendants arguing?

- Although Big Tech has said they're doing all they can, the internal research they hid from the public shows the opposite.
- Big Tech is trying to blame parents and the people who make harmful content. But the central problem is the social platforms themselves. They are addictive and deliver the most harmful content directly to young people, even when parents take all the steps to protect them.
- By designing platforms built for constant engagement with no regard for well-being, these companies trap children in unsafe environments, keeping them anxious, depressed, and isolated from their loved ones. Kids today can't imagine life without social media—and that's the point. Big Tech needs kids addicted to keep making record profits.

Who will testify?

- Top executives, including Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Instagram's Adam Mosseri, will testify about their role and leadership in making social media products that contribute to kids' anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, child sexual abuse material, and more.

- This is the first time Big Tech executives will testify and answer questions about knowingly harming kids. It's also the first time they could be held liable for their dangerously designed and harmful social media products.

What is some of the evidence we can expect?

- Throughout the social media addiction lawsuits, the plaintiffs will present internal company memos, research, emails, and more showing that these companies were well aware of the harm they were causing—and chose not to stop it.
- For example, while Instagram had a public “zero tolerance” policy for child sexual abuse material, the platform did not offer users a simple way to report child sexual abuse content and internally had a “17x” strike policy for accounts that were flagged as engaging in sex trafficking.
- Internal emails show Instagram employees were aware of the addictive nature of their product, referring to the platform as a drug and calling themselves “pushers.” Employees even showed some discomfort targeting kids as young as 11 years old—writing in emails that it felt like tobacco companies’ strategy a couple decades ago—but the company still moved forward with a business strategy reliant on kids’ chronic use.
- Although Meta developed AI tools to monitor their platforms for harmful content, internal memos show that the company didn’t automatically delete that content, meaning kids often saw posts about self-harm, drugs, and more after Meta had already discovered the content.
- The Tech Oversight Project will be regularly updating its trial microsite throughout the trial to highlight new evidence as it comes out.

What are the long-term implications of these cases?

- The social media addiction lawsuits are an opportunity to uncover the truth and build momentum to deliver real solutions that protect our kids.
- It has long felt like these Big Tech companies are untouchable—from the law, from stories of loss, even from their own reputation. But this is a moment of reckoning, the ground is shifting, and now it’s on us to turn this opportunity into lasting change.
- Our hope is that these cases will force social media platforms to fix their products. We want kids to be able to use social media as a tool for connection rather than an addiction they are beholden to.
- There are similar cases happening across the country, and other states will be looking to these lawsuits to see how we hold these companies accountable and protect our children.

When will the first case be decided?

- Since this is a jury trial, jurors will determine the outcome after both sides present their evidence and deliver closing arguments. The trial is expected to take 6-8 weeks.

Tough Q&A

How are social media platforms harmful for kids?

- Social media has become a machine designed to keep kids hooked, tracked, and exploited. These companies deliberately design their platforms to push the most “engaging” content, even if it’s highly dangerous. That can range from sexual predators to pro-suicide content, drugs, and abuse.
- What’s even more troubling is that these companies depend on children, sometimes as young as five, to make a profit. They take advantage of kids’ growing minds, pushing, and even demanding, excessive use, so they become lifelong addicts.
- The impact shows up every single day, fueling anxiety, depression, disrupted learning, eating disorders, and suicidal ideation. The horrific loss and harm that comes from this isn’t collateral—it’s intentional.

Isn’t it a free speech violation to limit the kind of content on social media platforms?

- The social media addiction lawsuits aren’t about third-party content—they’re about social media products being programmed and designed for addiction and harm.
 - When cars are designed with faulty airbags or when paint is manufactured with deadly toxins, those companies are held liable for damages and ordered to clean up their act. Now, it’s time for Big Tech to be held to the same standards.
- Big Tech’s business model relies on addiction. They designed their platforms to keep kids online at home, in class, even when they should be sleeping.
- Product features like infinite scroll, autoplay, and algorithmically-curated content were engineered to maximize engagement at the expense of kids’ well-being.
- Furthermore, Big Tech failed to implement adequate safety features despite having the technical capability to do so. The companies’ own research showed that safety features could save lives and protect kids. Instead, Big Tech executives hid those findings and doubled down on their dangerous products—no matter the human toll.

Shouldn’t parents be responsible for monitoring their kids’ social media usage?

- The reality is that parents can do everything right—from limiting screen time to setting controls, taking phones away at night, and more—and still watch social media platforms exploit children’s developing brains.
- This isn’t a parenting failure; it’s the result of deliberate choices from Big Tech.
- Big Tech also outright lies about the source of these harms and uses parents as scapegoats. They tell parents it’s their fault, even when their own research confirms the damage is by design.

Won’t placing guardrails around the algorithms hamper social media companies’ ability to compete and stifle American innovation?

- Children’s safety and American innovation go hand in hand.

- While decision-makers argue about innovation, kids are growing up using platforms and products designed to capture their attention at any cost.
- Big Tech steals kids' attention and distracts them from skills and experiences that will help them grow into engaged, capable members of society, threatening our future leaders' ability to contribute new ideas that lead to innovation.