



Senator Hawley to Introduce Legislation Banning Manipulative Video Game Features Aimed at Children

Senator Hawley's legislation would apply new consumer protections to games played by minors including:

- Games targeted at those under the age of 18.
 - This would be determined by subject matter, visual content, and other indicators similar to those used to determine applicability of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)
- Games with wider audiences whose developers knowingly allow minor players to engage in microtransactions

In such games, this bill would prohibit several forms of manipulative design:

Loot Boxes

- Microtransactions offering randomized or partially randomized rewards to players

Pay-to-Win

- Manipulation of a game's progression system – typically by building artificial difficulty or other barriers into game progression – to induce players to spend money on microtransactions to advance through content supposedly available to them at no additional cost
- Pay-to-win - Manipulation of the competitive balance between players of multiplayer games by allowing players who purchase microtransactions competitive advantages over other players

Enforcement

- These rules would be enforced by the Federal Trade Commission, which would treat the distribution of such games by publishers and online distributors as an unfair trade practice.
- State attorneys general would also be empowered to file suit to defend the residents of their states.