Understanding the Take It Down Act

A federal response to non-consensual intimate imagery, including AI-generated "deepfakes"

On May 19, 2025, President Donald Trump signed the **TAKE IT DOWN Act** into law, marking a significant federal step against non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII), including AI-generated "deepfakes." The legislation was championed by First Lady Melania Trump as part of her continued advocacy for children's safety and digital well-being.

KEY PROVISIONS

Criminalization

It is a federal crime to knowingly publish, or threaten to publish, intimate images without consent. Penalties include up to two years in prison when the victim is an adult and up to three years when the victim is a minor.

Mandatory Removal

Websites and social media platforms must remove reported content within 48 hours of a victim's request. Platforms had until May 19, 2026 to put this process in place.

Scope

The law covers both real and AI-generated images, addressing the growing problem of digital exploitation.

Enforcement

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) enforces the removal requirements, holding digital platforms accountable.

LEGISLATIVE JOURNEY

- First introduced in June 2024 by Senators Ted Cruz and Amy Klobuchar, the bill earned strong bipartisan support. It passed the Senate unanimously in December 2024 and again in February 2025, then passed the House by a 409–2 vote in April 2025.
- Its signing marked a rare instance of federal regulation aimed at curbing online abuse and strengthening digital privacy protections.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

- **Victim Protection:** The law gives victims of digital exploitation a critical tool: a legal path to content removal and criminal accountability.
- **Resource Alignment:** While the act does not directly allocate funding, it complements existing efforts by addressing a common form of online abuse that often intersects with trafficking.
- **Advocacy Alignment:** It supports ongoing work to combat digital exploitation and aligns with broader anti-trafficking strategies.

This legislation is a proactive step in addressing the evolving challenges of online exploitation and reinforces the commitment to protecting individuals from digital harm. **Need help removing an image taken when you were under 18?** Visit takeitdown.ncmec.org.

SOURCES

Congress.gov, S.146 – TAKE IT DOWN Act (Public Law 119-12); U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation; Associated Press; Wikipedia, "TAKE IT DOWN Act."