

ALL LAWMAKERS AND THE GOVERNOR AGREED:
SB 181 IS NECESSARY. WE WILL MAKE SURE
IT'S CLEAR AND EFFECTIVE



By: Senator
Lindsey Tichenor

ence not only garnered widespread attention but also played a pivotal role in shaping this law, establishing stronger boundaries and preventing future harm.

Unfortunately, these experiences represent only a fraction of what occurs. The Kentucky Department of Education reported 135 educator sexual misconduct cases between 2023 and 2024, excluding cases involving other staff and volunteers. A separate study found that 70 percent of offenders used technology or social media to access students. Beyond misconduct, SB 181 also addresses the broader issue of grooming students away from their families when values clash with those in authority. The U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed parents’ fundamental right to direct their child’s upbringing. SB 181 reinforces that right by requiring transparency in communication.

SB 181 had ample opportunity for public scrutiny. I filed similar legislation in 2024. Although it didn’t gain traction, the issue remained a priority. This year, the KDE and the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB) approached me about sponsoring a bill on grooming, one of their legislative priorities. They wrote:

The EPSB supports efforts to promote ethical behavior among all educators to ensure student safety and well-being. The EPSB encourages efforts aimed at stopping student-teacher boundary

violations, including clear prohibitions of grooming behaviors.

As discussions progressed, data showed private electronic communication was the key link in most grooming cases. Closing off this common access point became a logical and effective way to reduce grooming cases in schools.

I filed SB 181 on Feb. 14, and it advanced through the legislative process. No concerns were raised during the 2025 Legislative Session.

Despite passing with no opposition, I’ve since heard from education leaders on needed clarifications. I’m committed to refining the language while ensuring the law protects students and upholds the integrity of Kentucky’s education system.

Clarification may be needed in several areas, including which family members are exempt (such as stepparents, in-laws, and cousins), the definition of “school volunteer,” and guidance on using platforms in group settings, such as texting or social media. Questions have also been raised about how districts should honor parent-written consent for outside communication.

SB 181 provides districts with flexibility to select traceable communication platforms that meet their specific needs. I appreciate those already implementing the law thoughtfully and encourage others to engage in the process and help choose the most suitable tools from the many

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Despite concerns, the law's intent is widely supported. Students and teachers deserve to learn and work in an environment grounded in trust and integrity. I remain

committed to working with education professionals to achieve this goal.

Sen. Lindsey Tichenor, R-Smithfield, represents the 6th Senate District, including Oldham and Trimble Counties and part

of Jefferson County. She is vice chair of the Senate Education Commission and was the primary sponsor of 2025’s Senate Bill 181, which passed



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