WORD & WISDOM
FAITH FOR AN ETHICAL AI

February 12, 2026

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representative

Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Minority Leaders Schumer and Jeffries,

On behalf of **Word & Wisdom: Faith for an Ethical AI**, a cross-denominational coalition of Christian leaders and organizations working to advance a safe and responsible digital future, we write to respectfully urge Congress to bring the **DEFIANCE Act** to the floor and secure its swift, bipartisan passage. We are grateful for the Senate's leadership on this issue and look forward to the House acting promptly to follow suit.

America is already experiencing the consequences of rapid technological change outpacing existing legal protections. Few developments illustrate this more clearly than the growing use of AI-generated sexually explicit "deepfakes" and other non-consensual digital forgeries. These tools are increasingly being used to harass, extort, and intimidate individuals—often at great personal cost—leaving families, schools, and local communities to manage the damage.

This conduct constitutes a serious form of abuse: the fabrication and distribution of sexually explicit material using a person's likeness without consent. Women and girls are disproportionately targeted, and minors are increasingly at risk. The harm is not speculative. Reputations are damaged, relationships are strained, employment opportunities are jeopardized, and the psychological toll can be severe and long-lasting.

Christian leaders are engaged because we serve families and communities directly affected by these harms. Parents are struggling to protect their children. Schools and churches are responding to crises they did not create and cannot resolve on their own. Survivors are often left without clear legal recourse, forced to navigate takedown requests and platform policies that offer little accountability for those who cause the harm.

Our concern is rooted in a conviction shared by Americans across political and religious lines: every person possesses inherent worth and dignity. Human beings are wonderfully made, and no one should have their image exploited, altered, or weaponized for sexual humiliation or coercion.

This is why the DEFIANCE Act is both necessary and appropriate. It advances a straightforward principle of justice: when someone uses AI to create and distribute non-consensual, sexually explicit material, victims should have a clear and enforceable right to seek accountability. The bill does not overreach or stifle innovation. Instead, it fills a clear gap in existing law by providing survivors with a practical civil remedy and creating meaningful deterrence for bad actors.

The DEFIANCE Act also reflects a responsible approach to emerging technology—one that recognizes innovation must be paired with accountability. A digital marketplace that rewards engagement at any cost, without consequences for foreseeable harm, is neither sustainable nor consistent with the values of a free and ordered society. Reasonable guardrails are not hostile to innovation; they are essential to maintaining public trust.

We believe this legislation stands out because it is:

- **Targeted** to a specific, escalating harm;
- **Survivor-centered**, ensuring victims have agency and recourse;
- **Practical**, relying on established civil enforcement mechanisms; and
- **Bipartisan**, grounded in shared commitments to consent, personal responsibility, and the protection of children and families.

Congress now has an opportunity to draw a clear line: that the deliberate misuse of AI to sexually exploit others will not be tolerated. Families are not asking Washington to solve every challenge posed by artificial intelligence. They are asking Congress to act where the violation is clear and the harm is undeniable.

We urge you to prioritize floor consideration of the DEFIANCE Act and to demonstrate, through decisive action, that Congress will stand for accountability, parental rights, and the basic dignity of every person.

The Christian community stands ready to support this effort constructively: reinforcing its bipartisan rationale, supporting survivors with care, and helping ensure that technological progress remains consistent with our shared moral and civic responsibilities.

Respectfully,

American Values Coalition
Better Neighbors AI
Center for Public Justice
The Expectations Project
The Maiden Group
Mormon Women for Ethical Government
National Association of Evangelicals
National Latino Evangelical Coalition
Public Democracy
Renace
Truth's Table Foundation