

# TOP 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT SECTION 230

## Section 230 is the linchpin that holds the internet together



Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996 provides legal protections for a vast array of internet companies — big and small, social media platforms, online merchants and others — so they can allow users to post while setting basic safety and policy guardrails. Without Section 230 protections, internet service providers (ISPs), internet sites of all sizes, and users could be subject to a wave of crippling lawsuits because of things their users posted, or safety choices they made. That would force many platforms to restrict perfectly legal, constitutionally protected user generated content or roll back certain safety practices.



## Section 230 gives sites limited legal protection

Section 230 does not provide blanket immunity. Illegal content has no legal protection, for instance. Courts across the U.S. have ruled in many cases that there are limits to these legal protections.



## Rules and referees

Section 230 lets sites set rules and moderate the content allowed on their site in a way that is appropriate for them. People go to different sites for different things and Section 230 helps sites meet users' needs and expectations. Travel sites might block content unrelated to travel. Job review sites might block content unrelated to workplace experiences. Section 230 lets sites curate content without fear of frivolous lawsuits.



## Section 230 helps companies and organizations of all sizes

Section 230 doesn't just protect big social media platforms. It helps businesses and organizations of all sizes, such as online services that allow volunteer community moderation, message boards, PTAs, school and libraries.



## Section 230 strengthens online free speech

Sometimes, users post legal, constitutionally protected speech that others may want removed — such as a negative review about a workplace, product, or restaurant. Those comments provide valuable, previously hard-to-get information that consumers use in making decisions. Section 230 protects sites hosting authentic, unfavorable reviews without fear of frivolous lawsuits, so consumers can see real reviews and make good decisions when buying a product, booking a vacation or applying for a job.