

Business Leaders Join Forces to Push Back on Toxic Teen-focused Internet

NY, NY, UNITED STATES, October 11, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "What I challenge you to do is to find ways to break through this fractured media environment," Said US [Senator Cory Booker](#), in a wide-ranging GenZ forum streamed on YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok. It is "lulling us to surrender to cynicism about the system, to give up our sense of agency and power and remind people that they are the leaders we're looking for and find a way to trigger more people into activism."



Senator Cory Booker and Exec Director Steven Rosenbaum

Zamaan Qureshi, co-founder of Design it For Us, a Gen Z media activist organization, asked Booker: "What role can Congress and the government play - we've seen so much conversation around the impact of harmful algorithms?"

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Steven Rosenbaum, Exec Director and Co-Founder - Sustainable Media Center

As Congress considers legislation to give parents more control, Qureshi is more than a little skeptical of the outcome. "What about families who don't have parents? What about families who don't have active parents, parents who don't have the time to spend figuring out whether a platform is safe for their child to get on or not?" asked Qureshi

And Booker was honest about the complexity lawmakers are facing - "I have to be frank with you. If I had a child and they were 14 or 15, I would do everything I could to keep them off of these platforms. I just would. I've read data

study after study about the impact it has on self-esteem and the correlations between mental health issues. I would just try to keep them off as long as I possibly could." Booker compared the

social platforms to cigarette smoking - and looking at the impact on young girls said "if I told you there's a product that is gonna have this percentage of young girls who use this product, You would ban that product. We would all probably say, that's worse than cigarette smoking. In terms of that, we would ban it. So it's just hard for me."

The GenZ Roundtable, which streamed Tuesday, Sept 26th, on the sponsoring organization's website SustainableMedia.center was the 14th event this year, for the rapidly growing group. The video is available to be screened free here:

<https://youtu.be/uhjfuqHOMg4?si=yqx4p8T7jbK99DgM>

Bradley Tusk, political strategist and venture capitalist who is joining the newly formed Board of Trustees, says the Toxic Internet needs to be the focus of every media leader's attention:

"We have this incredibly toxic internet with really perverse incentives," says Tusk. "Platforms promote content to GenZ because that generates more eyeballs, more clicks, which makes them more money."

Tusk joined the just-announced Board of Trustees, whose members include. - Bradley Tusk (CEO and co-founder of Tusk Venture Partners), Eric Gertler (Executive chairman of U.S. News and World Report), Leo Hindrey (fmr AT&T Broadband and Founder YES Network), Mayo Stutz (Bessemer, fmr Chair NY Public Radio), Dan DeWolf (Partner Mintz), John Rose (BCG), and Andy Sernovitz (Social-impact advisor, and investor).

"When you find that what you helped build is causing more harm than good, there's no way you can get up in the morning and not do anything about it," said org Co-founder Steven Rosenbaum.

"I'm a very serious proponent of intergenerational collaboration," says Avalon Zborovsky-Fenster a social media activist who sits on the SMC Board and who has more than two million social media followers. She is studying the intersection of technology law and ethics at Barnard and was in the Booker conversation along with fifteen GenZ leaders.

The Booker GenZ conversation is part of a wide-ranging platform that is gaining traction and funding from a powerful and diverse board of media titans, tech founders, and business leaders. "When we talk to the biggest names in tech, they're fearful that our kids futures are at stake," said media entrepreneur and [Sustainable Media Center](#) co-founder Steven Rosenbaum. "We want to hold the platform profiteers responsible, and set a path that lead us to future where hate isn't a profit center."

Aidan Kohn-Murphy, who moderated the Booker conversation and founded the powerful activist org GenZforChange, says conversations like these are critical. "So, actually you can talk to young people about what they care about as an equal. Don't be afraid to talk to us. We want to work with you. We don't bite."

Next month - the Sustainable Media Center is convening a roundtable conversation with Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy. Murthy's Advisory listed the harms that social media is now a known risk of harm to the well-being of young people.

Rosenbaum says he appreciates the fast start his organization has had, as they celebrate their first birthday this month. But he acknowledges the hard work ahead. "Our GenZ board wants more than talk -They're anxious to drive real systemic change."

The organization's work was featured by The Associated Press in an article that can be read here: <https://apnews.com/article/social-media-youth-activism-algorithms-723a641716c0031911253abec0581271>

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