

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <https://commerce.senate.gov>

March 28, 2023

Mr. Sundar Pichai
Chief Executive Officer
Google LLC
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Pichai:

I write regarding the frequency, scope, and nature of Google's interactions with employees of U.S. government agencies in order to flag, monitor, review, and investigate content and accounts of Americans on your platforms.

The Twitter Files continue to reveal the extent to which U.S. government employees, acting in an official capacity, applied pressure to, as well as coordinated with, social media companies in an effort to restrict Americans' speech. Instead of focusing on their taxpayer-funded remit to protect and promote the interests of all Americans, agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of State (DOS) turned their attention to micromanaging what Americans can post and see online. Often, this censorship directly interfered in legitimate public debate around issues of national significance, such as elections and the evolving science on COVID-19.

This is not only a shocking abuse of government power, but also a blatant infringement on Americans' First Amendment rights. As the Supreme Court concluded in *Texas v. Johnson*, "[t]he government may not prohibit the verbal or nonverbal expression of an idea merely because society finds the idea offensive or disagreeable."¹ But the Twitter Files reveal that, in some cases, the government attempted to accomplish exactly that.

The American people deserve full transparency around the government's efforts to conscript social media platforms to investigate and suppress speech. I therefore request that you provide complete written responses to the following questions and copies of the documents requested no later than April 11, 2023.

1. Indicate whether Google employees had any contact, acting in their capacity as employees of Google, with officials from the following agencies and departments from January 1, 2016 to present. Please answer "yes" or "no" for each.
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 - d. U.S. Department of State (DOS)
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 - f. National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)
 - g. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
 - h. U.S. Department of the Treasury (UST)
 - i. U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)
 - j. U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)
 - k. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
 - l. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - m. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
 - n. Office of the Surgeon General (OSG)
 - o. National Security Council (NSC)
 - p. FBI – Foreign Influence Task Force (FITF)
 - q. FBI – National Election Command Post
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 - v. DHS – Office of Intelligence & Analysis (I&A)
 - w. FBI and DHS – Domestic Security Alliance Council (DSAC)
2. For each agency or department to which you responded “yes” for Question 1, provide a complete list of all methods and channels used for communication and/or document exchange, including but not limited to email, virtual or in-person meetings, phone calls, text messages, Slack, Signal, WhatsApp, Telegram, partner support or trusted partner channels, the DSAC portal, Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) channels, and Teleporter.
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- ll. Peter Strzok, FBI
- mm. [REDACTED], FBI San Francisco
- nn. [REDACTED], FBI [REDACTED]
- oo. [REDACTED], FBI San Francisco / [REDACTED]
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4. Did Google ever *receive*, regardless of whether solicited, a list of user accounts from or via an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1? If yes, please note the channel of communication and a description of the contents of such list(s), including whether they contained (a) accounts of U.S. citizens and (b) accounts of any U.S. federal, state, or local elected officials.
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 - a. Foreign mis- or disinformation, and/or foreign malign influence, related to the 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 federal election cycles.

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- b. Voting mis- or disinformation related to the 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 federal election cycles.
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 - f. Civil unrest related to abortion policy in the United States.
 - g. Civil unrest related to policing practices in the United States.
 - h. The dissemination or publication of any materials from the hard drive of Hunter Biden's laptop.
7. Copies of any unclassified documents, such as memos, threat assessments, joint advisories, or Liaison Information Reports (LIRs), that were provided to Google by an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1.
8. Please describe in detail the extent to which Google employees communicated with employees of other technology companies with respect to interactions with officials from the agencies and departments listed in Question 1. Include the names of those companies.

This letter also serves as a formal request to preserve any and all documents and information, inclusive of e-mails, text messages, internal message system messages, calls, logs of meetings, and internal memoranda, related to Google's interactions with U.S. government employees.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
Ranking Member

Encl: Outstanding Unanswered Questions

Appendix: Outstanding Unanswered Questions

February 13, 2023:

- Provide a complete list of the names of any individuals outside of your organization that you consulted with in developing any of the documents and information described in Question 3.
- On average, how much additional distribution can a poster expect from being included in your recommendations? Please include a brief summary of your methodology for estimating this percentage.
- What percentage of total time spent on your platforms is driven by your recommendation systems? Of that time, what is the median amount of time that users spend within a 24-hour period? Please include a brief summary of your methodology for calculating this percentage.
- What percentage of total time spent by users under 18 on your platforms is driven by your recommendation systems? Of that time, what is the median amount of time that users under 18 spend within a 24-hour period? Please include a brief summary of your methodology for calculating this percentage.
- For the recommendations described in Question 7, please list the top 25 topics, using your internal classifications, associated with the recommended content, entities, or accounts.
- For the recommendations described in Question 7, please list the top 100 sources of recommendations.
- Do you place any limits on the total amount of content, accounts, or entities that users can be served by your recommendation systems in a given period of time? If yes, please elaborate. If no, please explain why not.
- Have you ever, or do you currently, maintain any hardcoded lists of individual accounts, entities, or individual pieces of content that are (a) whitelisted or (b) blacklisted from appearing in your recommendation systems? If yes, please provide a description of each list and the number of items on each list.
- Have you ever, or do you currently, maintain any hardcoded lists of individual accounts, entities, or individual pieces of content that are (a) boosted or (b) downranked in your recommendation systems? If yes, please provide a description of each list and the number of items on each list.
- Have you ever, or do you currently, include any human-curated content, accounts, or entities in your recommendations? If yes, please describe and provide copies of any curation guidelines.
- Please list all U.S.-based users with more than 500,000 total followers or subscribers that have been removed from recommendations, even if temporarily, for a period of at least

three continuous days within the past ten years. Please include the duration of and reason for the removal, and note whether the removal is currently in effect.

- What percentage of U.S.-based recommendations on your platform(s) are political in nature, such as accounts of political figures or content discussing current political issues? If you do not include political content in recommendations, please (a) elaborate on why not and (b) provide your precision rate for enforcing this rule.
- Please list the top 100 sources of political content shown in recommendations, as defined by total distribution from recommendations, for each year over the past ten years. Please provide these lists regardless of whether you have a policy to not include political content in recommendations.
- Please list all federal, state, and local elected officials that have been removed from or downranked in recommendations, even if temporarily, for a period of at least three continuous days within the past ten years. Please include the duration of and reason for the restriction, and note whether the restriction is currently in effect.
- What protocols do you have in place, if any, to audit the accuracy of your recommendation systems relative to your platform's stated rules?
- How do you ensure that content, entities, and accounts are not being improperly or mistakenly filtered from your recommendation systems?
- If an account or a significant portion of content posted by an account is removed from recommendations, does the account holder receive notice? If yes, please elaborate on the nature of the notice and whether such removal can be appealed. If no, please explain why not.

AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
EDWARD MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
GARY PETERS, MICHIGAN
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS
JON TESTER, MONTANA
KYRSTEN SINEMA, ARIZONA
JACKY ROSEN, NEVADA
BEN RAY LUJÁN, NEW MEXICO
JOHN HICKENLOOPER, COLORADO
RAPHAEL WARNOCK, GEORGIA
PETER WELCH, VERMONT

TED CRUZ, TEXAS
JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
ROGER WICKER, MISSISSIPPI
DEB FISCHER, NEBRASKA
JERRY MORAN, KANSAS
DAN SULLIVAN, ALASKA
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
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TED BUDD, NORTH CAROLINA
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J.D. VANCE, OHIO
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March 28, 2023

Mr. Ryan Roslansky
Chief Executive Officer
LinkedIn
1000 West Maude Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94085

Dear Mr. Roslansky:

I write regarding the frequency, scope, and nature of LinkedIn's interactions with employees of U.S. government agencies in order to flag, monitor, review, and investigate content and accounts of Americans on your platforms.

The Twitter Files continue to reveal the extent to which U.S. government employees, acting in an official capacity, applied pressure to, as well as coordinated with, social media companies in an effort to restrict Americans' speech. Instead of focusing on their taxpayer-funded remit to protect and promote the interests of all Americans, agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of State (DOS) turned their attention to micromanaging what Americans can post and see online. Often, this censorship directly interfered in legitimate public debate around issues of national significance, such as elections and the evolving science on COVID-19.

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March 28, 2023

Mr. Tony Stubblebine
Chief Executive Officer
Medium
799 Market Street, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

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7. Copies of any unclassified documents, such as memos, threat assessments, joint advisories, or Liaison Information Reports (LIRs), that were provided to Medium by an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1.
8. Please describe in detail the extent to which Medium employees communicated with employees of other technology companies with respect to interactions with officials from the agencies and departments listed in Question 1. Include the names of those companies.

This letter also serves as a formal request to preserve any and all documents and information, inclusive of e-mails, text messages, internal message system messages, calls, logs of meetings, and internal memoranda, related to Medium's interactions with U.S. government employees.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
Ranking Member

AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
EDWARD MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
GARY PETERS, MICHIGAN
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS
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RAPHAEL WARNOCK, GEORGIA
PETER WELCH, VERMONT

TED CRUZ, TEXAS
JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
ROGER WICKER, MISSISSIPPI
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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <https://commerce.senate.gov>

LILA HELMS, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
BRAD GRANTZ, REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR

March 28, 2023

Mr. Mark Zuckerberg
Chief Executive Officer
Meta
1601 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg:

I write regarding the frequency, scope, and nature of Meta's interactions with employees of U.S. government agencies in order to flag, monitor, review, and investigate content and accounts of Americans on your platforms.

The Twitter Files continue to reveal the extent to which U.S. government employees, acting in an official capacity, applied pressure to, as well as coordinated with, social media companies in an effort to restrict Americans' speech. Instead of focusing on their taxpayer-funded remit to protect and promote the interests of all Americans, agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of State (DOS) turned their attention to micromanaging what Americans can post and see online. Often, this censorship directly interfered in legitimate public debate around issues of national significance, such as elections and the evolving science on COVID-19.

This is not only a shocking abuse of government power, but also a blatant infringement on Americans' First Amendment rights. As the Supreme Court concluded in *Texas v. Johnson*, "[t]he government may not prohibit the verbal or nonverbal expression of an idea merely because society finds the idea offensive or disagreeable."¹ But the Twitter Files reveal that, in some cases, the government attempted to accomplish exactly that.

The American people deserve full transparency around the government's efforts to conscript social media platforms to investigate and suppress speech. I therefore request that you provide complete written responses to the following questions and copies of the documents requested no later than April 11, 2023.

1. Indicate whether Meta employees had any contact, acting in their capacity as employees of Meta, with officials from the following agencies and departments from January 1, 2016 to present. Please answer "yes" or "no" for each.
 - a. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

¹ *Texas v. Johnson*, 491 U.S. 397, 410-422 (1989).

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 - c. Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)
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 - h. U.S. Department of the Treasury (UST)
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 - p. FBI – Foreign Influence Task Force (FITF)
 - q. FBI – National Election Command Post
 - r. FBI – Office of Private Sector (OPS) program
 - s. DOS – Global Engagement Center (GEC)
 - t. DHS – Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
 - u. DHS – Countering Foreign Influence Task Force (CFITF)
 - v. DHS – Office of Intelligence & Analysis (I&A)
 - w. FBI and DHS – Domestic Security Alliance Council (DSAC)
2. For each agency or department to which you responded “yes” for Question 1, provide a complete list of all methods and channels used for communication and/or document exchange, including but not limited to email, virtual or in-person meetings, phone calls, text messages, Slack, Signal, WhatsApp, Telegram, partner support or trusted partner channels, the DSAC portal, Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) channels, and Teleporter.
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- nn. [REDACTED], FBI [REDACTED]
- oo. [REDACTED], FBI San Francisco / [REDACTED]
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- qq. Kim Wyman, DHS CISA CFITF

4. Did Meta ever *receive*, regardless of whether solicited, a list of user accounts from or via an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1? If yes, please note the channel of communication and a description of the contents of such list(s), including whether they contained (a) accounts of U.S. citizens and (b) accounts of any U.S. federal, state, or local elected officials.
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6. Did Meta ever *receive*, regardless of whether solicited, requests from or via an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1 to review, monitor, investigate, promote, or restrict² content or accounts related to the following topics? Answer “yes” or “no” for each topic, indicate the requesting agency or department, and describe any actions taken by Meta subsequent to the request.
 - a. Foreign mis- or disinformation, and/or foreign malign influence, related to the 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 federal election cycles.

² Do not exclude communications that merely “flagged” content for Meta’s attention, even if those communications were accompanied by a disclaimer stating that the agency or department was not advocating that Meta take a particular action with respect to the referenced content or accounts.

- b. Voting mis- or disinformation related to the 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 federal election cycles.
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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
Ranking Member

Encl: Outstanding Unanswered Questions

Appendix: Outstanding Unanswered Questions

February 13, 2023:

- Define “recommendation system.”
- List all products, in-product features, and algorithms that, in your view, function as recommendation systems on your platform.
- Provide a complete list of the names of any individuals outside of your organization that you consulted with in developing any of the documents and information described in Question 3.
- On average, how much additional distribution can a poster expect from being included in your recommendations? Please include a brief summary of your methodology for estimating this percentage.
- What percentage of total time spent on your platform is driven by your recommendation systems? Of that time, what is the median amount of time that users spend within a 24-hour period? Please include a brief summary of your methodology for calculating this percentage.
- What percentage of total time spent by users under 18 on your platform is driven by your recommendation systems? Of that time, what is the median amount of time that users under 18 spend within a 24-hour period? Please include a brief summary of your methodology for calculating this percentage.
- For the recommendations described in Question 7, please list the top 25 topics, using your internal classifications, associated with the recommended content, entities, or accounts.
- For the recommendations described in Question 7, please list the top 100 sources of recommendations.
- Do you place any limits on the total amount of content, accounts, or entities that users can be served by your recommendation systems in a given period of time? If yes, please elaborate. If no, please explain why not.
- Have you ever, or do you currently, maintain any hardcoded lists of individual accounts, entities, or individual pieces of content that are (a) whitelisted or (b) blacklisted from appearing in your recommendation systems? If yes, please provide a description of each list and the number of items on each list.
- Have you ever, or do you currently, maintain any hardcoded lists of individual accounts, entities, or individual pieces of content that are (a) boosted or (b) downranked in your recommendation systems? If yes, please provide a description of each list and the number of items on each list.

- Have you ever, or do you currently, include any human-curated content, accounts, or entities in your recommendations? If yes, please describe and provide copies of any curation guidelines.
- Please list all U.S.-based users with more than 500,000 total followers or subscribers that have been removed from recommendations, even if temporarily, for a period of at least three continuous days within the past ten years. Please include the duration of and reason for the removal, and note whether the removal is currently in effect.
- What percentage of U.S.-based recommendations on your platform(s) are political in nature, such as accounts of political figures or content discussing current political issues? If you do not include political content in recommendations, please (a) elaborate on why not and (b) provide your precision rate for enforcing this rule.
- Please list the top 100 sources of political content shown in recommendations, as defined by total distribution from recommendations, for each year over the past ten years. Please provide these lists regardless of whether you have a policy to not include political content in recommendations.
- Please list all federal, state, and local elected officials that have been removed from or downranked in recommendations, even if temporarily, for a period of at least three continuous days within the past ten years. Please include the duration of and reason for the restriction, and note whether the restriction is currently in effect.
- What protocols do you have in place, if any, to audit the accuracy of your recommendation systems relative to your platform's stated rules?
- How do you ensure that content, entities, and accounts are not being improperly or mistakenly filtered from your recommendation systems?

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WEBSITE: <https://commerce.senate.gov>

LILA HELMS, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
BRAD GRANTZ, REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR

March 28, 2023

Mr. Satya Nadella
Chief Executive Officer
Microsoft
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052

Dear Mr. Nadella:

I write regarding the frequency, scope, and nature of Microsoft's interactions with employees of U.S. government agencies in order to flag, monitor, review, and investigate content and accounts of Americans on your platforms.

The Twitter Files continue to reveal the extent to which U.S. government employees, acting in an official capacity, applied pressure to, as well as coordinated with, social media companies in an effort to restrict Americans' speech. Instead of focusing on their taxpayer-funded remit to protect and promote the interests of all Americans, agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of State (DOS) turned their attention to micromanaging what Americans can post and see online. Often, this censorship directly interfered in legitimate public debate around issues of national significance, such as elections and the evolving science on COVID-19.

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The American people deserve full transparency around the government's efforts to conscript social media platforms to investigate and suppress speech. I therefore request that you provide complete written responses to the following questions and copies of the documents requested no later than April 11, 2023.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
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WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <https://commerce.senate.gov>

March 28, 2023

Mr. Bill Ready
Chief Executive Officer
Pinterest
651 Brannan Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

Dear Mr. Ready:

I write regarding the frequency, scope, and nature of Pinterest's interactions with employees of U.S. government agencies in order to flag, monitor, review, and investigate content and accounts of Americans on your platforms.

The Twitter Files continue to reveal the extent to which U.S. government employees, acting in an official capacity, applied pressure to, as well as coordinated with, social media companies in an effort to restrict Americans' speech. Instead of focusing on their taxpayer-funded remit to protect and promote the interests of all Americans, agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of State (DOS) turned their attention to micromanaging what Americans can post and see online. Often, this censorship directly interfered in legitimate public debate around issues of national significance, such as elections and the evolving science on COVID-19.

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- oo. ██████████, FBI San Francisco / ██████████
- pp. ██████████, FBI OGC
- qq. Kim Wyman, DHS CISA CFITF

4. Did Pinterest ever *receive*, regardless of whether solicited, a list of user accounts from or via an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1? If yes, please note the channel of communication and a description of the contents of such list(s), including whether they contained (a) accounts of U.S. citizens and (b) accounts of any U.S. federal, state, or local elected officials.
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² Do not exclude communications that merely “flagged” content for Pinterest’s attention, even if those communications were accompanied by a disclaimer stating that the agency or department was not advocating that Pinterest take a particular action with respect to the referenced content or accounts.

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 - f. Civil unrest related to abortion policy in the United States.
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 - h. The dissemination or publication of any materials from the hard drive of Hunter Biden's laptop.
7. Copies of any unclassified documents, such as memos, threat assessments, joint advisories, or Liaison Information Reports (LIRs), that were provided to Pinterest by an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1.
8. Please describe in detail the extent to which Pinterest employees communicated with employees of other technology companies with respect to interactions with officials from the agencies and departments listed in Question 1. Include the names of those companies.

This letter also serves as a formal request to preserve any and all documents and information, inclusive of e-mails, text messages, internal message system messages, calls, logs of meetings, and internal memoranda, related to Pinterest's interactions with U.S. government employees.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
Ranking Member

AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
EDWARD MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
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TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS
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JACKY ROSEN, NEVADA
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LILA HELMS, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <https://commerce.senate.gov>

March 28, 2023

Mr. Steve Huffman
Chief Executive Officer
Reddit
1455 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Huffman:

I write regarding the frequency, scope, and nature of Reddit's interactions with employees of U.S. government agencies in order to flag, monitor, review, and investigate content and accounts of Americans on your platforms.

The Twitter Files continue to reveal the extent to which U.S. government employees, acting in an official capacity, applied pressure to, as well as coordinated with, social media companies in an effort to restrict Americans' speech. Instead of focusing on their taxpayer-funded remit to protect and promote the interests of all Americans, agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of State (DOS) turned their attention to micromanaging what Americans can post and see online. Often, this censorship directly interfered in legitimate public debate around issues of national significance, such as elections and the evolving science on COVID-19.

This is not only a shocking abuse of government power, but also a blatant infringement on Americans' First Amendment rights. As the Supreme Court concluded in *Texas v. Johnson*, "[t]he government may not prohibit the verbal or nonverbal expression of an idea merely because society finds the idea offensive or disagreeable."¹ But the Twitter Files reveal that, in some cases, the government attempted to accomplish exactly that.

The American people deserve full transparency around the government's efforts to conscript social media platforms to investigate and suppress speech. I therefore request that you provide complete written responses to the following questions and copies of the documents requested no later than April 11, 2023.

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 - c. Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)
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 - i. U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)
 - j. U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)
 - k. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
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 - o. National Security Council (NSC)
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 - q. FBI – National Election Command Post
 - r. FBI – Office of Private Sector (OPS) program
 - s. DOS – Global Engagement Center (GEC)
 - t. DHS – Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
 - u. DHS – Countering Foreign Influence Task Force (CFITF)
 - v. DHS – Office of Intelligence & Analysis (I&A)
 - w. FBI and DHS – Domestic Security Alliance Council (DSAC)
2. For each agency or department to which you responded “yes” for Question 1, provide a complete list of all methods and channels used for communication and/or document exchange, including but not limited to email, virtual or in-person meetings, phone calls, text messages, Slack, Signal, WhatsApp, Telegram, partner support or trusted partner channels, the DSAC portal, Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) channels, and Teleporter.
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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
Ranking Member

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United States Senate

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WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <https://commerce.senate.gov>

LILA HELMS, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
BRAD GRANTZ, REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR

March 28, 2023

Ms. Maryana Iskander
Chief Executive Officer
Wikimedia Foundation
1 Montgomery Street, 16th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Ms. Iskander:

I write regarding the frequency, scope, and nature of Wikimedia’s interactions with employees of U.S. government agencies in order to flag, monitor, review, and investigate content and accounts of Americans on your platforms.

The Twitter Files continue to reveal the extent to which U.S. government employees, acting in an official capacity, applied pressure to, as well as coordinated with, social media companies in an effort to restrict Americans’ speech. Instead of focusing on their taxpayer-funded remit to protect and promote the interests of all Americans, agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of State (DOS) turned their attention to micromanaging what Americans can post and see online. Often, this censorship directly interfered in legitimate public debate around issues of national significance, such as elections and the evolving science on COVID-19.

This is not only a shocking abuse of government power, but also a blatant infringement on Americans’ First Amendment rights. As the Supreme Court concluded in *Texas v. Johnson*, “[t]he government may not prohibit the verbal or nonverbal expression of an idea merely because society finds the idea offensive or disagreeable.”¹ But the Twitter Files reveal that, in some cases, the government attempted to accomplish exactly that.

The American people deserve full transparency around the government’s efforts to conscript social media platforms to investigate and suppress speech. I therefore request that you provide complete written responses to the following questions and copies of the documents requested no later than April 11, 2023.

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Ted Cruz
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LILA HELMS, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
BRAD GRANTZ, REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR

March 28, 2023

Mr. Jim Lanzone
Chief Executive Officer
Yahoo
770 Broadway, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10003

Dear Mr. Lanzone:

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The Twitter Files continue to reveal the extent to which U.S. government employees, acting in an official capacity, applied pressure to, as well as coordinated with, social media companies in an effort to restrict Americans' speech. Instead of focusing on their taxpayer-funded remit to protect and promote the interests of all Americans, agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of State (DOS) turned their attention to micromanaging what Americans can post and see online. Often, this censorship directly interfered in legitimate public debate around issues of national significance, such as elections and the evolving science on COVID-19.

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4. Did Yahoo ever *receive*, regardless of whether solicited, a list of user accounts from or via an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1? If yes, please note the channel of communication and a description of the contents of such list(s), including whether they contained (a) accounts of U.S. citizens and (b) accounts of any U.S. federal, state, or local elected officials.
5. Did Yahoo ever *send*, regardless of whether solicited, a list of user accounts to an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1? If yes, please note the channel of communication and a description of the contents of such list(s), including whether they contained (a) accounts of U.S. citizens and (b) accounts of any U.S. federal, state, or local elected officials.
6. Did Yahoo ever *receive*, regardless of whether solicited, requests from or via an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1 to review, monitor, investigate, promote, or restrict² content or accounts related to the following topics? Answer “yes” or “no” for each topic, indicate the requesting agency or department, and describe any actions taken by Yahoo subsequent to the request.
 - a. Foreign mis- or disinformation, and/or foreign malign influence, related to the 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 federal election cycles.

² Do not exclude communications that merely “flagged” content for Yahoo’s attention, even if those communications were accompanied by a disclaimer stating that the agency or department was not advocating that Yahoo take a particular action with respect to the referenced content or accounts.

- b. Voting mis- or disinformation related to the 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 federal election cycles.
 - c. The treatment of authoritative information related to voting during the 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 federal election cycles.
 - d. Mis- or disinformation related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - e. The treatment of authoritative information related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - f. Civil unrest related to abortion policy in the United States.
 - g. Civil unrest related to policing practices in the United States.
 - h. The dissemination or publication of any materials from the hard drive of Hunter Biden's laptop.
7. Copies of any unclassified documents, such as memos, threat assessments, joint advisories, or Liaison Information Reports (LIRs), that were provided to Yahoo by an employee of any agency or department listed in Question 1.
8. Please describe in detail the extent to which Yahoo employees communicated with employees of other technology companies with respect to interactions with officials from the agencies and departments listed in Question 1. Include the names of those companies.

This letter also serves as a formal request to preserve any and all documents and information, inclusive of e-mails, text messages, internal message system messages, calls, logs of meetings, and internal memoranda, related to Yahoo's interactions with U.S. government employees.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
Ranking Member