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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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

JOHN KEAST, STAFF DIRECTOR
DAVID STRICKLAND, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

July 16, 2020

Mr. Jack Dorsey
Chief Executive Officer
Twitter, Inc.
1355 Market Street
Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94103

Mr. Dorsey:

Yesterday, reports emerged of what appeared to be a widespread hack of numerous Twitter accounts belonging to some of the country's most well-known individuals and companies.¹ Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, presidential candidate Joe Biden, former President Barack Obama, musician Kanye West, companies including Apple, and many others posted similar tweets asking their followers, in some cases numbering in the millions, to donate to the same cryptocurrency account.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation has oversight and legislative jurisdiction over all matters related to the internet and consumer protection. As such, this incident, which combines the need to protect internet users from fraud with larger concerns about social manipulation and disinformation online, is of great concern to the Committee.

I understand that Twitter is investigating the matter and has taken steps to remove the offending tweets. But it cannot be overstated how troubling this incident is, both in its effects and in the apparent failure of Twitter's internal controls to prevent it. Millions of Americans who follow notable figures on Twitter believe that the posts they see from those figures are legitimate. In this case, that trust appears to have been violated for the personal monetary gain of the hacker. It is not difficult to imagine future attacks being used to spread disinformation or otherwise sow discord through high-profile accounts, particularly through those of world leaders.

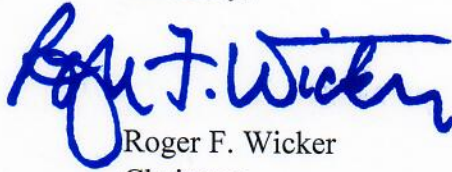
In the interest of fully informing the Commerce Committee about this incident and Twitter's response, I would ask that you please arrange for your staff to brief the Committee staff on this

¹ See, e.g., Rachel Lerman, *Joe Biden, billionaires and corporate accounts targeted in Twitter bitcoin hack*, WASH. POST (July 15, 2020), available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/07/15/musk-gates-twitter-hack/?hpid=hp_no-name_hp-in-the-news%3Apage%2Fin-the-news.

issue as soon as possible, but no later than July 23, 2020. If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Olivia Trusty of the Committee staff at (202) 224-1251.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Chairman

CC: Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member