

JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
ROY BLUNT, MISSOURI
TED CRUZ, TEXAS
DEB FISCHER, NEBRASKA
JERRY MORAN, KANSAS
DAN SULLIVAN, ALASKA
CORY GARDNER, COLORADO
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, WEST VIRGINIA
MIKE LEE, UTAH
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA
RICK SCOTT, FLORIDA

MARIA CANTWELL, WASHINGTON
AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
EDWARD MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO
GARY PETERS, MICHIGAN
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS
JON TESTER, MONTANA
KYRSTEN SINEMA, ARIZONA
JACKY ROSEN, NEVADA

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

January 15, 2021

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

Dear Mr. Dorsey,

In the wake of the fatal attack on the U.S. Capitol last week, social media companies made a series of decisions to restrict the use of their platforms and access to content. Although these decisions were initially targeted at preventing further violence, the restrictions expanded in the following days. The result was thousands of conservative users' accounts and content being restricted or permanently removed from platforms and an entire platform being denied hosting services, causing it to shut down operations temporarily.

In October, you appeared before the Senate Commerce Committee to discuss Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, concerns around politically motivated censorship, and legislative proposals that would increase transparency and accountability. I am concerned that recent actions taken by your company only highlight the need for an update to the special liability protections afforded by Section 230. The current framework of Section 230 has shielded massive technology companies from any consequences for failing to protect the American tradition of free speech.

The opaque decision-making and denial of access to numerous users by companies like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, primarily targeted at conservative accounts and content, merit additional scrutiny. Americans deserve transparency and accountability for what appears to be politically biased censorship—silencing the voices of users and public figures alike. Accordingly, I request that you please provide detailed information in response to the questions below.

1. YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter recently took actions in what appeared to be a series of closely timed decisions. Did your company or employees coordinate or otherwise consult with the other platforms regarding restrictions or permanent bans on the accounts of any conservative users, content, or public figures? If so, how?
2. What was the decision-making process around the removal or restriction of such accounts on your platform? Was this process consistent with your existing terms of service, community standards, or guidelines for the removal or restriction of accounts?

3. What was the timeline for deciding to remove or restrict such accounts? Did you approve of those decisions at the time actions were taken?

I request that you please reply as soon as possible but by no later than 10:00 a.m. EST on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Olivia Trusty with my staff at (202) 224-1251.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Chairman

JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
ROY BLUNT, MISSOURI
TED CRUZ, TEXAS
DEB FISCHER, NEBRASKA
JERRY MORAN, KANSAS
DAN SULLIVAN, ALASKA
CORY GARDNER, COLORADO
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, WEST VIRGINIA
MIKE LEE, UTAH
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA
RICK SCOTT, FLORIDA

MARIA CANTWELL, WASHINGTON
AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
EDWARD MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO
GARY PETERS, MICHIGAN
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS
JON TESTER, MONTANA
KYRSTEN SINEMA, ARIZONA
JACKY ROSEN, NEVADA

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

January 15, 2021

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

Dear Mr. Pichai,

In the wake of the fatal attack on the U.S. Capitol last week, social media companies made a series of decisions to restrict the use of their platforms and access to content. Although these decisions were initially targeted at preventing further violence, the restrictions expanded in the following days. The result was thousands of conservative users' accounts and content being restricted or permanently removed from platforms and an entire platform being denied hosting services, causing it to shut down operations temporarily.

In October, you appeared before the Senate Commerce Committee to discuss Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, concerns around politically motivated censorship, and legislative proposals that would increase transparency and accountability. I am concerned that recent actions taken by your company only highlight the need for an update to the special liability protections afforded by Section 230. The current framework of Section 230 has shielded massive technology companies from any consequences for failing to protect the American tradition of free speech.

The opaque decision-making and denial of access to numerous users by companies like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, primarily targeted at conservative accounts and content, merit additional scrutiny. Americans deserve transparency and accountability for what appears to be politically biased censorship—silencing the voices of users and public figures alike. Accordingly, I request that you please provide detailed information in response to the questions below.

1. YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter recently took actions in what appeared to be a series of closely timed decisions. Did your company or employees coordinate or otherwise consult with the other platforms regarding restrictions or permanent bans on the accounts of any conservative users, content, or public figures? If so, how?
2. What was the decision-making process around the removal or restriction of such accounts on your platform? Was this process consistent with your existing terms of service, community standards, or guidelines for the removal or restriction of accounts?

3. What was the timeline for deciding to remove or restrict such accounts? Did you approve of those decisions at the time actions were taken?

I request that you please reply as soon as possible but by no later than 10:00 a.m. EST on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Olivia Trusty with my staff at (202) 224-1251.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Chairman

JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
ROY BLUNT, MISSOURI
TED CRUZ, TEXAS
DEB FISCHER, NEBRASKA
JERRY MORAN, KANSAS
DAN SULLIVAN, ALASKA
CORY GARDNER, COLORADO
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, WEST VIRGINIA
MIKE LEE, UTAH
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA
RICK SCOTT, FLORIDA

MARIA CANTWELL, WASHINGTON
AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
EDWARD MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO
GARY PETERS, MICHIGAN
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS
JON TESTER, MONTANA
KYRSTEN SINEMA, ARIZONA
JACKY ROSEN, NEVADA

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

January 15, 2021

Mr. Mark Zuckerberg
Chief Executive Officer
Facebook, Inc.
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg,

In the wake of the fatal attack on the U.S. Capitol last week, social media companies made a series of decisions to restrict the use of their platforms and access to content. Although these decisions were initially targeted at preventing further violence, the restrictions expanded in the following days. The result was thousands of conservative users' accounts and content being restricted or permanently removed from platforms and an entire platform being denied hosting services, causing it to shut down operations temporarily.

In October, you appeared before the Senate Commerce Committee to discuss Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, concerns around politically motivated censorship, and legislative proposals that would increase transparency and accountability. I am concerned that recent actions taken by your company only highlight the need for an update to the special liability protections afforded by Section 230. The current framework of Section 230 has shielded massive technology companies from any consequences for failing to protect the American tradition of free speech.

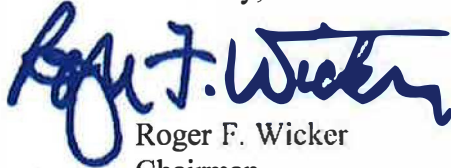
The opaque decision-making and denial of access to numerous users by companies like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, primarily targeted at conservative accounts and content, merit additional scrutiny. Americans deserve transparency and accountability for what appears to be politically biased censorship—silencing the voices of users and public figures alike. Accordingly, I request that you please provide detailed information in response to the questions below.

1. YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter recently took actions in what appeared to be a series of closely timed decisions. Did your company or employees coordinate or otherwise consult with the other platforms regarding restrictions or permanent bans on the accounts of any conservative users, content, or public figures? If so, how?
2. What was the decision-making process around the removal or restriction of such accounts on your platform? Was this process consistent with your existing terms of service, community standards, or guidelines for the removal or restriction of accounts?

3. What was the timeline for deciding to remove or restrict such accounts? Did you approve of those decisions at the time actions were taken?

I request that you please reply as soon as possible but by no later than 10:00 a.m. EST on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Olivia Trusty with my staff at (202) 224-1251.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Chairman

JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
ROY BLUNT, MISSOURI
TED CRUZ, TEXAS
DEB FISCHER, NEBRASKA
JERRY MORAN, KANSAS
DAN SULLIVAN, ALASKA
CORY GARDNER, COLORADO
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, WEST VIRGINIA
MIKE LEE, UTAH
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA
RICK SCOTT, FLORIDA

MARIA CANTWELL, WASHINGTON
AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
EDWARD MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO
GARY PETERS, MICHIGAN
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS
JON TESTER, MONTANA
KYRSTEN SINEMA, ARIZONA
JACKY ROSEN, NEVADA

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

January 15, 2021

Mr. Tim Cook
Chief Executive Officer
Apple
1 Infinite Loop
Cupertino, CA 95014

Dear Mr. Cook,

In the wake of the fatal attack on the U.S. Capitol last week, social media and technology companies made a series of decisions to restrict the use of their platforms and access to content. Although the initial actions were targeted at preventing further violence, the restrictions expanded in the following days. The result was thousands of conservative users' accounts and content being restricted or permanently removed from platforms. In addition, Apple decided to suspend Parler—a social media platform popular among conservatives—from its application store.

In October, the Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing entitled, “Does Section 230’s Sweeping Immunity Enable Big Tech Bad Behavior?,” to discuss concerns around politically-motivated censorship and legislative proposals that would increase transparency and accountability. I am concerned that the recent actions taken by your company only highlight the need for an update to the special liability protections afforded by Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. The current framework of Section 230 has shielded massive technology companies from any consequences for failing to protect the American tradition of free speech.

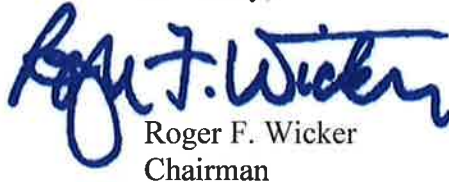
The opaque decision-making and denial of access to numerous users by technology and social media companies, primarily targeted at conservative users and content, merit additional scrutiny. Americans deserve transparency and accountability for what appears to be politically biased censorship—silencing the voices of users and public figures alike. Accordingly, I request that you please provide detailed information in response to the questions below.

1. Apple took action in what appeared to be a series of closely timed decisions among technology and social media companies. Did your company or employees coordinate or otherwise consult with other companies before suspending Parler from your application store? If so, how?
2. What was the decision-making process around suspending Parler from your application store? Was this consistent with your existing terms of service, community standards, or guidelines for suspending apps from your application store?

3. What was the timeline for deciding to suspend Parler from your application store? Did you approve of that decision at the time the action was taken?

I request that you please reply as soon as possible but by no later than 10:00 a.m. EST on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Olivia Trusty with my staff at (202) 224-1251.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Chairman

JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
ROY BLUNT, MISSOURI
TED CRUZ, TEXAS
DEB FISCHER, NEBRASKA
JERRY MORAN, KANSAS
DAN SULLIVAN, ALASKA
CORY GARDNER, COLORADO
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, WEST VIRGINIA
MIKE LEE, UTAH
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA
RICK SCOTT, FLORIDA

MARIA CANTWELL, WASHINGTON
AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
EDWARD MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO
GARY PETERS, MICHIGAN
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS
JON TESTER, MONTANA
KYRSTEN SINEMA, ARIZONA
JACKY ROSEN, NEVADA

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

January 15, 2021

Mr. Jeff Bezos
Chief Executive Officer
Amazon
410 Terry Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Mr. Bezos,

In the wake of the fatal attack on the U.S. Capitol last week, social media and technology companies made a series of decisions to restrict the use of their platform and access to content. Although the initial actions were targeted at preventing further violence, the restrictions expanded in the following days. The result was thousands of conservative users' accounts and content being restricted or permanently removed from platforms. In addition, Amazon decided to terminate hosting services to Parler—a social media platform popular among conservatives—causing it to shut down operations temporarily.

In October, the Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing entitled, “Does Section 230’s Sweeping Immunity Enable Big Tech Bad Behavior?,” to discuss concerns around politically-motivated censorship and legislative proposals that would increase transparency and accountability. I am concerned that the recent actions taken by your company only highlight the need for an update to the special liability protections afforded by Section 230. The current framework of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act has shielded massive technology companies from any consequences for failing to protect the American tradition of free speech.

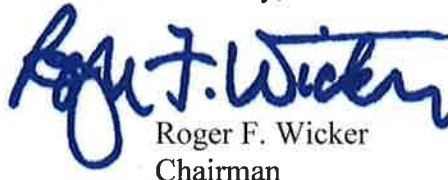
The opaque decision-making and denial of access to numerous users by technology and social media companies, primarily targeted at conservative accounts and content, merit additional scrutiny. Americans deserve transparency and accountability for what appears to be politically biased censorship—silencing the voices of users and public figures alike. Accordingly, I request that you please provide detailed information in response to the questions below.

1. Amazon took action in what appeared to be a series of closely timed decisions among technology and social media companies. Did your company or employees coordinate or otherwise consult with other companies before terminating hosting services to Parler? If so, how?
2. What was the decision-making process around the termination of hosting services to Parler? Was this process consistent with your existing terms of service, community standards, or guidelines for terminating hosting services?

3. What was the timeline for deciding to terminate Parler's hosting services? Did you approve of that decision at the time the action was taken?

I request that you please reply as soon as possible but by no later than 10:00 a.m. EST on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Olivia Trusty with my staff at (202) 224-1251.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Chairman