Tennessee v. Meta
Case No. 23-1364-IV
PX-04034

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DISINFORMATION NATION: SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN PROMOTING EXTREMISM AND MISINFORMATION

Thursday, March 25, 2021

House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on Communications and Technology,

joint with

Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce,

Committee on Energy and Commerce,

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittees met, pursuant to notice, at 12:02 p.m., via Webex, Hon. Michael F. Doyle [chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology] presiding.

Present from the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology: Representatives Doyle, McNerney, Clarke, Veasey, McEachin, Soto, O'Halleran, Rice, Eshoo, Butterfield, Matsui, Welch, Cardenas, Kelly, Craig, Fletcher, Pallone (ex officio); Latta, Scalise, Guthrie, Kinzinger, Johnson, Long,

Walberg, Carter, Duncan, Curtis, and Rodgers (ex officio).

Present from the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce: Representatives Schakowsky, Rush, Castor, Trahan, McNerney, Clarke, Cardenas, Dingell, Kelly, Soto, Rice, Craig, Fletcher, Pallone (ex officio); Upton, Latta, Guthrie, Bucshon, Dunn, Lesko, Pence, Armstrong, and Rodgers (ex officio).

Also Present: Representatives Blunt Rochester, Tonko, Schrier; Crenshaw, Burgess, Griffith, Joyce, and McKinley.

Staff Present: A.J. Brown, Counsel; Jeff Carroll, Staff Director; Parul Desai, FCC Detailee; Jennifer Epperson, Counsel; Lisa Goldman, Senior Counsel; Waverly Gordon, General Counsel; Daniel Greene, Professional Staff Member; Tiffany Guarascio, Deputy Staff Director; Perry Hamilton, Deputy Chief Clerk; Alex Hoehn-Saric, Chief Counsel, Communications and Consumer Protection; Ed Kaczmarski, Policy Analyst; Zach Kahan, Deputy Director of Outreach and Member Service; Jerry Leverich, Senior Counsel; Dan Miller, Professional Staff Member; David Miller, Counsel; Phil Murphy, Policy Coordinator; Joe Orlando, Policy Analyst; Kaitlyn Peel, Digital Director; Tim Robinson, Chief Counsel; Chloe Rodriguez, Deputy Chief Clerk; Andrew Souvall, Director of Communications Outreach and Member Services; Sydney Terry, Policy Coordinator; Anna Yu, Professional Staff Member; Michael Cameron, Minority Policy Analyst, CPC, Energy,

Environment; Nate Hudson, Minority Staff Director; Peter Kielty, Minority General Counsel; Bijan Koohmaraie, Minority Chief Counsel; Tim Kurth, Minority Chief Counsel, CPC; Kate O'Connor, Minority Chief Counsel, C&T; and Michael Taggard, Minority Policy Director.

*Mr. Doyle. The Subcommittee on Communications and Technology and Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce will now come to order. Today we will be holding a joint hearing entitled, "Disinformation Nation: Social Media's Role in Promoting Extremism and Misinformation.''

Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, today's hearing is being held remotely. All members and witnesses will be participating via videoconferencing. As part of our hearing, microphones will be set on mute for the purpose of eliminating inadvertent background noise.

Members and witnesses, you will need to unmute your microphones each time you wish to speak. Additionally, members will need to be visible on screen in order to be recognized.

Due to the anticipated length of this hearing, the committee will take a 15-minute recess around 3:00 o'clock to provide witnesses and members a restroom break.

Finally, documents for the record can be sent to Ed Kasmarski and Joe Orlando at the email addresses we have provided to your staff. All documents will be entered into the record at the conclusion of the hearing.

The chair will now recognize himself for five minutes.

Our nation is drowning in disinformation driven by social media. Platforms that were once used to share photos of kids with grandparents are all too often havens of hate,

harassment, and division. The way I see it, there were two faces to each of your platforms.

Facebook has Family and Friends Neighborhood, but it is right next to the one where there is a white nationalist rally every day. YouTube is a place where people share quirky videos, but down the street anti-vaxxers, COVID deniers, QAnon supporters, and flat Earthers are sharing videos. Twitter allows you to bring friends and celebrities into your home, but also Holocaust deniers, terrorists, and worse.

Now, it would be one thing if every user chose where to go organically, but almost everything is scripted on social media platforms. Facebook recognizes antisocial tendencies in one user and invites them to visit the white nationalists. YouTube sees another user is interested in COVID-19, and auto-starts an anti-vax video. On Twitter, a user follows the trending conversation never knowing it is driven by bots and coordinated disinformation networks run by foreign agents.

Your platforms have changed how people across the planet communicate, connect, learn, and stay informed. The power of this technology is awesome and terrifying, and each of you has failed to protect your users and the world from the worst consequence of your creations.

This is the first time the three of you have appeared

before Congress since the deadly attack on the Capitol on January 6th. That event was not just an attack on our democracy and our electoral process, but an attack on every member of this committee and in the Congress.

Many of us were on the House floor and in the Capitol when that attack occurred, and we were forced to stop our work of certifying the election and retreat to safety, some of us wearing gas masks and fearing for our lives. We fled as a mob desecrated the Capitol, the House floor, and our democratic process. People died that day, and hundreds were seriously injured.

That attack, and movement that motivated it, started and was nourished on your platforms. Your platforms suggested groups for people to join, videos they should view, and posts they should like, driving this movement forward with terrifying speed and efficiency.

FBI documents show that many of these individuals used your platforms to plan, recruit, and execute this attack. According to independent research, users on Facebook were exposed 1.1 billion times to misinformation related to the election last year alone despite changes to your policies and claims that you have removed election misinformation.

Our Nation is in the middle of a terrible pandemic. Nearly 550,000 Americans have lost their lives to this deadly disease, more than any other country on the planet. And an

independent study found that on Facebook alone, that users across five countries, including the United States, were exposed to COVID disinformation an estimated 3.8 billion times, again despite claims of fixes and reforms.

And now, as the Biden administration is working to implement the American Rescue Plan and get vaccines in people's arms, we are faced with waves of disinformation on social media about the safety and efficacy of these shots. These vaccines are the best chance we have to fight this virus, and the content that your websites are still promoting, still recommending, and still sharing is one of the biggest reasons people are refusing the vaccine.

And things haven't changed. My staff found content on YouTube telling people not to get vaccines, and was recommended to similar videos. The same was true on Instagram, where it was not only easy to find vaccine disinformation, but platforms recommended similar post. The same thing happened on Facebook, except they also had anti-vax groups to suggest as well. And Twitter was no different. If you go to any of these superspreader accounts that remain up despite the policies meant to curb this anti-vax content, you will see this content.

Now, understand this. You can take this content down. You can reduce division. You can fix this. But you choose not to. We saw your platforms remove ISIS terrorist content.

We saw you tamp down on COVID misinformation at the beginning of the pandemic. And we have seen disinformation drop when you have promoted reliable news sources and removed serial disinformation superspreaders from your platform. You have the means.

But time after time, you are picking engagement and profit over the health and safety of your users, our Nation, and our democracy. These are serious issues, and to be honest, it seems like you all just shrug off billion-dollar fines. Your companies need to be held accountable. We need rules, regulations, technical experts in government, and audit authority of your technologies. Ours is the committee of jurisdiction, and we will legislate to stop this. The stakes are simply too high.

The chair will now recognize Mr. Latta, ranking member of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, for five minutes for his opening statement.

*Mr. Latta. Well, I thank the chairman for recognizing me. And I want to thank our witnesses for being with us today, for a conversation that is long overdue in the energy and commerce committee. I am deeply concerned by your decisions to operate your companies in a vague and biased manner, with little to no accountability while using Section 230 as a shield for your actions and their real-world consequences.

Your companies had the power to silence the President of the United States, shut off legitimate journalism in Australia, shut down legitimate scientific debate on a variety of issues, dictate which articles or websites are seen by Americans when they search the internet. When these actions are taken, users have little to no recourse to appeal the decision if they are aware of your actions. In most cases, we simply don't know.

What does this mean for everyday Americans? We are all aware of Big Tech's ever-increasing censorship of deserving voices and their commitment to serve the radical progressive agenda by influencing a generation of children, who are moving, shutting down, or canceling any news, books, and even now toys, that aren't considered woke. This is fundamentally un-American.

At a recent hearing on disinformation and extremism online, Professor Turley, one of the Nation's foremost experts on constitutional law, testified about the little brother problem, a problem which private entities do for the government which it cannot legally do for itself.

As of January of this year, Google has a greater than 92 market share in search. Facebook has over 2.7 billion monthly users. And Twitter has 187 million daily users. Your companies have enormous control over whose ideas are seen, read, or heard around the world. This gives you great

power. And if misused, as we have seen in recent years, your actions have a ripple effect throughout the world that result in American voices being removed from the marketplace of ideas.

While the little brother problem of censorship is frightening enough, other serious harms are occurring on these platforms that affect ordinary Americans. Young American children and teenagers are addicted -- actually addicted -- to their devices and social media. This problem has been exacerbated by the pandemic and will only get worse if children continue to be separated from their peers and cannot learn from their teachers in a classroom.

Your platforms are purposely designed to keep our children hooked to their screens. The use of social media has been linked to increased rates of depression, mental illness, cyber-bullying, and suicide among America's youth. Illegal drugs continue to be sold online despite your previous commitment to solve these issues.

Mr. Chairman, I do ask unanimous consent to submit a letter from the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy for the record.

*Mr. Doyle. Without objection, so ordered.

*Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.

[The letter referred to by Mr. Latta follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********

*Mr. Latta. Serious problems continue to persist, and I wonder how much you are truly dedicating to combating these actions. What actions are you taking to educate Americans about the dangers of using your site, especially the dangers for kids?

As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, we have oversight of any change made to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. Section 230 provides you with liability protection for content moderation decisions made in good faith. Based on recent actions, however, it is clear that in your definition of good faith, moderation includes censoring viewpoints you disagree with and establishing a faux independent appeals process that doesn't make its content moderation decisions based on American principles of free expression. I find that highly concerning.

I look forward to today's hearing as an important step in reconsidering the extent to which Big Tech deserves to retain the significant liability protection. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

*Mr. Doyle. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.

The chair now recognizes Chair Schakowsky, chair of the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, for five minutes for her opening statement.

*Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you. It is a pleasure to co-chair this meeting with you.

I want to welcome our witnesses and thank them for coming. It is not an exaggeration to say that your companies have fundamentally and permanently transformed our very culture and our understanding of the world. Much of this is for good, but it is also true that our country, our democracy, even our understanding of what is truth has been harmed by the proliferation and dissemination of misinformation and extremism, all of which has deeply divided us.

What our witnesses today need to take away from this hearing is that self-regulation has come to the end of its road, and that this democracy, this democratic -- the people that you see before you, elected by the people, is preparing to move forth with legislation and regulation.

The regulation that we seek should not attempt to limit constitutionally protected freedom of speech, but it must hold platforms accountable when they are used to incite violence and hatred or, as in the case of the COVID pandemic, spread misinformation that costs thousands of lives.

All three of the companies that are here today run platforms that are hotbeds of misinformation and disinformation. And despite all the promises and new policies to match, disinformation was rampant in the 2020

election, especially targeting vulnerable communities. For example, Spanish language ads run by the Trump campaign falsely accused President Biden of being endorsed by Venezuelan President Maduro.

The spread of disinformation fed upon itself until it arrived at the Capitol of the United States on January 6th, which cost five lives. The lives lost in the insurgency were not the first cases of these platforms' failure, nor even the worst. In 2018, Facebook admitted a genocide of the Rohingya people in Myanmar was planned and executed on Facebook.

2020 saw the rise of coronavirus disinformation on Facebook platforms, including the playing of the -- they called it "The Plandemic.'' This film got 1.8 million views and 150,000 shares before it was removed. Disinformation like Plandemic made people skeptical of the need for vaccines and almost certainly cost -- contributed to the horrible loss of life during the pandemic. Disinformation also hops platforms to spread viruses. Disinformation also hops from platform to platform. The Plandemic actually was first on YouTube before it was on Facebook and Instagram and Twitter.

Misinformation regarding the election dropped 73 percent across social media platforms after Twitter permanently suspended Trump as well as -- and also the Capitol insurgency and QAnon.

But the question really is: What took so long? The

witnesses here today have demonstrated time and time again that they do not -- that self-regulation has not worked. They must be held accountable for allowing disinformation and misinformation to spread. And that is why I will be introducing the Online Consumer Protection Act, which I hope will earn bipartisan support. And thank you. I will yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady yields back.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Bilirakis, ranking member for the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, for five minutes for his opening remarks.

*Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it. Thank you for participating in today's hearing, all the witnesses and the members.

I have been thinking about this hearing since our side first requested this hearing last year. My time in college has provided me enough knowledge about the history of the committee to know what the Telecommunications Act was and, importantly, what it wasn't. Components of that law have been struck down by the counts, while other provisions are interpreted and applied differently than first conceived. This is all a departure from congressional intent.

Regardless of what one thinks of whether all of the Communications Decency Act was the right approach, the same members that voted for Section 230 voted for that entire

bill. The statute was meant to protect our society, specifically our children.

To our witnesses today, here lies the problem for you: You don't want the Federal Government telling you what parts of your company you are allowed to operate. So imagine things from our perspective when you pick and choose what parts of the law you want to follow.

I really do admire your ingenuity. You have created something truly remarkable, in my opinion. But with that power, you must also be good Samaritans, and you have an obligation to be stewards of your platform. If your legal department doesn't believe you are bound to the intent of the law, I would hope your moral compasses will.

Many of my colleagues will raise legitimate concerns about the attack on the Capitol from January, and other colleagues can point to what occurred in our cities last summer. These were all incidents where social media escalated tension, incited chaos, and bred extremism through echo chambers and algorithms.

As a new Republican leader, quite an honor, on the commerce protection and commerce committee, so the consumer protection and commerce committee, I have been digging into how your companies operate. That led me to run a survey of my district following our Big Tech hearing announcement. The conclusion is my constituents simply don't trust you anymore.

With thousands of responses, over 82 percent say they do not trust Big Tech to be good stewards of their platforms or consistently enforce their policies. That includes my constituent who told me, "We were providing information to local families on teen suicide risks on Facebook Livestream. It was blocked by Facebook.''

Another constituent said she has seen countless teens be bullied online or simply not able to process a devastating comparison game that they are forced to deal with on social media. Others told me they stopped using your services altogether out of fear and distrust. One even told me they quit social media due to treatment from your companies over their families' Christian views.

Each one of these represents a story of how your companies have failed people. And you will be hearing from my colleagues with more of these stories about how Big Tech has lost its way, highlighting a much larger problem. People want to use your services, but they suspect your coders are designing what they think we should see and hear by keeping us online longer than ever, and all with the purpose to polarize or monetize us, disregarding any consequences for the assault on our inherent freedoms which we hold so dearly.

So I don't want to hear about how changing your current law is going to fresh startups because I have heard directly from them, accusing you of anticompetitive tactics. None of

us want to damage entrepreneurs. What I do want to hear is what you will do to bring our country back from the fringes and stop the poisonous practices that drive depression, isolation, and suicide, and instead cooperate with law enforcement to protect our citizens.

Our kids are being lost while you say you will try to do better, as we have heard countless time already. We need true transparency and real change. We need, again, not empty promises from you, and we have heard that over and over again. The fear you should have coming into this hearing today isn't that you are going to get upbraided by a Member of Congress. It is that our committee knows how to get things done when we come together. We can do this with you or without you. And we will.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Pallone, chairman of the full committee, for five minutes for his opening statement.

*The Chairman. Thank you, Chairman Doyle and Schakowsky, for this very important hearing. We are here today because the spread of disinformation and extremism has been growing online, particularly on social media, where there are little to no guardrails in place to stop it.

And unfortunately, this disinformation and extremism doesn't just stay online. It has real-world, often dangerous

and even violent, consequences. And the time has come to hold online platforms accountable for their part in the rise of disinformation and extremism.

According to a survey conducted by Pew earlier this month, 30 percent of Americans are still hesitant or simply do not want to take the COVID-19 vaccine. On January 6, our Nation's Capitol was violently attacked. This month, Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas identified domestic violent extremism as the "greatest threat'' to the United States. And crimes against Asian Americans have risen by nearly 150 percent since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Five years ago, during the 2016 Presidential elections, Facebook, Google, and Twitter were warned about -- but simply ignored -- their platforms' role in spreading disinformation. And since then, the warnings have continued but the problem has only gotten worse.

Only after public outrage and pressure did these companies make inadequate attempts to appease critics and lawmakers. But despite the public rebuke, Wall Street continued to reward the companies' strategy to promote misinformation and disinformation by driving their stock prices even higher.

And now, despite repeated promises to seriously tackle this crisis, Facebook, Google, and Twitter instead routinely

make minor changes to their policies in response to the public relations crisis of the day. And they will change some underlying internal policy that may or may not be related to the problem. But that is it. The underlying problem remains.

So Mr. Chairman, it is now painfully clear that neither the market nor public pressure will force these social media companies to take the aggressive action they need to take to eliminate disinformation and extremism from their platforms. And, therefore, it is time for Congress and this committee to legislate and realign these companies' incentives.

Today our laws give these companies and their leaders a blank check to do nothing. Rather than limit the spread of disinformation, Facebook, Google, and Twitter have created business models that exploit the human brain's preference for divisive content to get Americans hooked on their platform, at the expense of the public interest.

It isn't just that social media companies are allowing disinformation to spread -- it is that, in many cases, they are actively amplifying and spreading it themselves. And fines, to the extent they are levied at all, have simply become the cost of doing business.

The dirty truth is that they are relying on algorithms to purposefully promote conspiratorial, divisive, or extremist content so they can take more money in ad dollars. And this is because the more outrageous and extremist the content, the more

engagement and views these companies get from their users. And more views equal more money, Mr. Chairman. That is what it is all about, more money.

It is crucial to understand that these companies aren't just mere bystanders -- they are playing an active role in the meteoric rise of disinformation and extremism because they make money on it. So when a company is actually promoting this harmful content, I question whether existing liability protections should apply.

Members on this Committee have suggested legislative solutions and introduced bills. The Committee is going to consider all these options so that we can finally align the interests of these companies with the interests of the public and hold the platforms and their CEOs accountable when they stray.

That is why you are here today, Mr. Zuckerberg, Mr. Pichai, and Mr. Dorsey. You have failed to meaningfully change after your platforms played a role in fomenting insurrection, in abetting the spread the virus, and trampling Americans civil liberties.

And while it may be true that some bad actors will shout fire in a crowded theater, by promoting harmful content, your platforms are handing them a megaphone to be heard in every theater across the country and the world. Your business model itself has become the problem.

And the time for self-regulation is over. It is time we legislate to hold you accountable. That is what we are going to do. And I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Doyle and Ms. Schakowsky, because I know that you are very serious about moving forward on legislation, which we will do. I promise everyone.

Thank you, and I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back. The chair now recognizes Ms. Rodgers, the ranking member of the full committee, for five minutes for her opening statement.

*Ms. Rodgers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ten years ago, when I joined Big Tech platforms, I thought they would be a force for good. I thought that they would help us build relationships and promote transparency in Congress. I can testify today I was wrong. That is not what has transpired. You have broken my trust. Yes, because you failed to promote the battle of ideas and free speech. Yes, because you censor political viewpoints you disagree with. Those polarizing actions matter for democracy.

But do you know what convinced me Big Tech is a destructive force? It is now you have abused your power to manipulate and harm our children. Your platforms are my biggest fear as a parent. I am a mom of three school-aged kids, and my husband and I are fighting the Big Tech battles in our household every day.

It is a battle for their development, a battle for their mental health, and ultimately, a battle for their safety. I have monitored your algorithms. I have monitored where your algorithms lead them. It is frightening. And I know that I am not alone.

After multiple teenaged suicides in my community, I reached out to our schools and we started asking questions: What is going on with our kids? What is making them feel so alone, so empty and in despair? And this is what I heard over and over again from parents, pediatricians, school administrators, and teachers. They are all raising the alarm about social media.

A day doesn't go by that I don't talk to friends and other parents who tell me their 14-year-old is depressed. She used to love soccer. Now they can't get her to do anything. She never gets off her device or leaves her room. I think about a mom who told me she can't leave her daughter alone, ever, because she harms herself; for the family who is recovering after almost losing their daughter to a predator she met online.

These stories are not unique to me or Eastern Washington. I recently heard of a young college student who has lost nine friends to suicide. This is unimaginable. The science on social media is becoming clear. Between 2011 and 2018, rates of depression, self-harm, suicides, and suicide

attempts exploded among American teens.

During that time, rates of teen depression increased more than 60 percent, with a larger increase among young girls. Between 2009 and 2015, emergency room admissions for self-harm among 10- to 14-year-olds tripled. And suicide substantially increased.

One study found during that time, teens who use their devices for five or more hours a day were 66 percent more likely to have at least one suicide-related outcome compared to those who used their for just one. Other studies found that teens who spend more time online report lower psychological well-being and more feelings of loneliness.

Remember, our kids, the users, are the product. You, Big Tech, are not advocates for children. You exploit and profit off of them. Big Tech needs to be exposed and completely transparent for what you are doing to our children so parents like me can make informed decisions. We also expect Big Tech to do more to protect children because you haven't done enough. Big Tech has failed to be good stewards of your platforms.

I have two daughters and a son with a disability. Let me be clear: I do not want you defining what is true for them. I do not want their future manipulated by your algorithms. I do not want their self-worth defined by the engagement tools you built to attract their attention. I do

not want them to be in danger from what you have created. I do not want their emotions and vulnerabilities taken advantage of so you can make more money and have more power.

I am sure most of my colleagues on this committee who are parents and grandparents feel the same way. Over 20 years ago, before we knew what Big Tech would become, Congress gave you liability protections. I want to know: Why do you think you still deserve those protections today? What will it take for your business model to stop harming children? I know I speak for millions of moms when I say we need answers and we will not rest until we get them.

Thank you.

*Mr. Doyle. I thank the gentlelady. The gentlelady yields back.

The chair would now like to remind members that pursuant to committee rules, all members' written opening statements shall be made a part of the record.

I would now like to introduce our witnesses for today's hearing and thank them all for appearing today. First we have Mark Zuckerberg, chairman and chief executive officer of Facebook; Sundar Pichai, chief executive officer of Google; and Jack Dorsey, chief executive officer of Twitter.

We want to thank all three of you for joining us today. We look forward to your testimony. Each of you will have five minutes to give your opening statements.

585 Mr. Zuckerberg, we will start with you. You are
586 recognized for five minutes.
587

STATEMENTS OF MARK ZUCKERBERG, CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF FACEBOOK; SUNDAR PICHAI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF GOOGLE; AND JACK DORSEY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF TWITTER

STATEMENT OF MARK ZUCKERBERG

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Chairs Pallone, Schakowsky, and Doyle; Ranking Members Rodgers, Latta, and Bilirakis; and members of the committee, I am glad that this committee is looking at all the ways that misinformation and disinformation show up in our country's discourse.

There are important challenges here for our society. We have to decide how we want to handle speech that is legal but harmful, and who should be responsible for what people say. Misinformation is not a new problem. It was 200 years ago that a congressman said that a lie would travel from Maine to Georgia while truth was still getting on its boots. And disinformation has often been spread through traditional media, too.

But the internet gives everyone the power to communicate, and that certainly presents unique challenges. Now, people often says things that aren't verifiably true but that speak to their lived experiences. I think we have to be careful restricting that. For example, if someone feels

intimidated or discriminated against while voting, I believe that they should be able to share their experience, even if the election overall was fair.

I don't think anyone wants a world where you can only say things that private companies judge to be true, where every text message, email, video, and post has to be fact-checked before you hit send. But at the same time, we also don't want misinformation to spread that undermines confidence in vaccines, stops people from voting, or causes other harms.

At Facebook, we do a lot to fight misinformation. We have removed content that could lead to imminent real-world harm. We have built an unprecedented third party fact-checking program, and if something is rated false, then we have warning labels and significantly reduce its distribution. We invest a lot in directing billions of people to authoritative information.

The system isn't perfect. But it is the best approach that we have found to address misinformation in line with our country's values. It is not possible to catch every piece of harmful content without infringing on people's freedoms in a way that I don't think that we would be comfortable with as a society.

Our approach was tested in 2020 when we took extraordinary steps during an extraordinary election. We

removed voting misinformation; banned hundreds of malicious and conspiracy networks, including QAnon; labeled posts that prematurely or wrongly declared victory; and directed people to official results. We labeled over 180 million posts. We directed 140 million people to our official Voting Information Center. And we helped 4 and a half million people register to vote.

We did our part to secure the integrity of the election. And then, on January 6th, President Trump gave a speech rejecting the results and calling on people to fight. The attack on the Capitol was an outrage, and I want to express my sympathy to all of the members, and Capitol workers who had to live through this disgraceful moment in our history. And I want to express my gratitude to the Capitol police, who were on the front lines in defense of our democracy.

I believe that the former President should be responsible for his words, and that the people who broke the law should be responsible for their actions. So that leaves the question of the broader information ecosystem. And I can't speak for everyone else -- the TV channels, radio stations, news outlets, websites, and other apps -- but I can tell you what we did.

Before January 6th, we worked with law enforcement to identify and address threats. During and after the attack, we provided extensive support in identifying the

insurrectionists, and removed posts supporting violence. We didn't catch everything, but we made our services inhospitable to those who might do harm. And when we feared that he would incite further violence, we suspended the former President's account.

Now, many people are concerns that platforms can ban leaders. I am, too. I don't think that private companies should make so many decisions like this alone. We need an accountable process, which is why we created an independent oversight board that can overrule our decisions. And we need democratically agreed rules for the internet.

The reality is, our country is deeply divided right now, and that isn't something that tech companies alone can fix. Now, we all have a part to play in helping to turn things around, and I think that starts with taking a hard look at how we got here.

Now, some people say that the problem is that social networks are polarizing us. But that is not at all clear from the evidence or research. Polarization was rising in America long before social networks were even invented. And it is falling or stable in many other countries where social networks are popular. Others claim that algorithms feed us content that makes us angry because it is good for business, but that is not accurate, either.

I believe that the division we see today is primarily

the result of a political and media environment that drives Americans apart. And we need to reckon with that if we are going to make progress. I know that technology can help bring people together. We see it every day on our platforms.

Facebook is successful because people have a deep desire to connect and share, not to stand apart and fight. And we believe that connectivity and togetherness are more powerful ideals than division and discord, and that technology can be part of the solution to the challenges our society is facing. And we are ready to work with you to move beyond hearings and get started on real reform. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Zuckerberg follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********

*Mr. Doyle. Thank you, Mr. Zuckerberg.

Now Mr. Pichai. You are now recognized for five minutes. Mr. Pichai, are you on mute?

*Mr. Pichai. Sorry. I had my volume on.

STATEMENT OF SUNDAR PICHAI

*Mr. Pichai. Chairman Doyle, Ranking Member Latta, Chairwoman Schakowsky, Ranking Member Bilirakis, full committee Chair Pallone, and full committee Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

To begin, I want to express my sympathies to those who have lost loved ones to COVID or the recent gun violence in Boulder and Atlanta. In difficult times, we are re minded of what connects us as Americans -- the hope that we can make things better for our families and our communities. And we at Google are committed to that work.

I joined Google because I believed the internet was the best way to bring the benefits of technology to more people. Over the past three decades, we have seen how it has inspired the best in society by expanding knowledge, powering businesses, and providing opportunities for discovery and connection.

I am proud that anyone can turn to Google for help, whether they are looking for vaccine information, learning new skills on YouTube, or using digital tools to grow their businesses. In 2020 our products helped 2 million U.S. businesses and publishers generate [redacted] in economic activity. We are energized by the opportunity to help people

at scale, and humbled by the responsibility that comes with it.

Thousands of people at Google are focused on everything from cyber-attacks to privacy to today's topic, misinformation. Our mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful. The goal to that is providing trustworthy content and opportunities for free expression while combating misinformation.

It is a big challenge without easy answers. 500-plus hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute. And approximately 15 percent of Google searches each day are near to us. Eighteen months ago, no one had heard of COVID-19. Sadly, coronavirus was the top trending search last year.

Staying ahead of new challenges to keep users safe is a top priority. We saw the importance of that on January 6th, when a mob stormed the U.S. Capitol. Google strongly condemns these violent acts on our democracy and mourns the lives lost.

In response, we raised up authoritative sources across our products. On YouTube, we removed livestreams and videos that violated our "incitement to violence'' policies, and began issuing strikes to those in violation of our "presidential elections'' policy. We removed apps from the Play Store for inciting violence, and stopped ads referencing

the 2020 election or the Capitol riots as part of our "sensitive events'' policy.

We were able to act quickly because we were prepared ahead of the 2020 elections. Our reminders of how to register and vote were viewed over 2 billion times. YouTube's election results information panels have been viewed more than 8 billion times.

We also worked to keep campaign safe from by cyber-attacks and protect platforms from abuse. After the December 8 safe harbor deadline for States to certify elections, we removed content from YouTube that alleged widespread fraud changed the outcome of the election.

This past year, we have also focused on providing quality information during the pandemic. Globally, we have committed over [redacted] in ad grants for COVID-related PSAs to governments, health organizations, and nonprofits. On YouTube, our COVID information panels have been viewed over 400 billion times. We also removed 850,000 videos and blocked nearly 100 million COVID-related acts throughout 2020.

Across all of this work, we strive to have transparent policies and enforce them without regard to politics or point of view. Our ability to provide a range of information and viewpoints, while also being able to remove this information, is possible only because of legal frameworks like Section

230. It is foundational to the open web, which has been a powerful force for good for so many.

I look forward to sharing more about our approach today and working together to create a path forward for the next three decades. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pichai follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********

*Mr. Doyle. Thank you, Mr. Pichai.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Dorsey for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF JACK DORSEY

*Mr. Dorsey. Thank you, members of the Energy and Commerce Committee and its subcommittees, for the opportunity to speak with the American people about how Twitter may be used to spread disinformation, and our solutions. My remarks will be brief so we can move to your questions and discussion.

In our discussion today, some of you might bring up specific tweets or examples, and I will probably have an answer like, "My team will follow up with you.'' I don't think that is useful. I would rather us focus on principles and approaches to address these problems. I will start with ours.

We believe in free expression. We believe in free debate and conversation to find the truth. At the same time, we must balance that with our desire for our service not to be used to sow confusion, division, or destruction. This makes the freedom to moderate content critical to us.

Our process to moderate content is designed to constantly evolve. We observe what is happening on our service. We work to understand the ramifications. And we use that understanding to strengthen our operations. We push ourselves to improve, based on the best information we have.

Much of what we are likely to discuss today are entirely

new situations the world has never experienced before, and in some unique cases, involved elected officials. We believe the best way to face a big, new challenge is through narrowing the problem to have the greatest impact.

Disinformation is a broad concept, and we needed to focus our approach on where we saw the greatest risk if we hoped to have any impact at all. So we chose to focus on disinformation leading to offline harm, and three categories to start: manipulated media, public health, and civic integrity.

Many of you will have strong opinions on how effective we are in this work. Some of you will say we are doing too much and removing free speech rights. Some of you will say we are not doing enough and end up causing more harm. Both points of view are reasonable and worth exploring.

If we woke up tomorrow and decided to stop moderating content, we would end up with a service very few people or advertisers would want to use. Ultimately, we are running a business, and a business wants to grow the number of customers it serves. Enforcing policy is a business decision. Different businesses and services will have different policies, some more liberal than others, and we believe it is critical this variety continues to exist. Forcing every business to behave the same reduces innovation and individual choice, and diminishes free marketplace

ideals.

If instead we woke up tomorrow and decided to ask the government to tell us what content to take down or leave up, we may end up with a service that couldn't be used to question the government. This is a reality in many countries today, and is against the right of an individual. This would also have the effect of putting enormous resource requirements on businesses and services, which would further entrench only those who are able to afford it. Smaller businesses would not be able to compete, and all activity would be centralized into very few businesses.

So how do we resolve these two viewpoints? One way is to create shared protocols. Social media has proven itself important enough to be worthy of an internet protocol, one that a company like Twitter can contribute to and compete on creating experiences people love to use. We started work on such a protocol, which we call Blue Sky. It intends to act as a decentralized, open source social media protocol, not owned by any single company or organization. Any developer around the world can help develop it, just as any company can access its services.

But does an open protocol address the concerns raised here? Greater transparency is the strongest benefit. Anyone around the world can see everything that is happening in the newsletter, including exactly how it works. One doesn't have

to trust a company. Just look at the source code.

Second, since the base protocol is shared, it will increase innovation around business models, recommendation algorithms, and moderation controls, which are in the hands of individuals rather than private companies. This will allow people to experiment in a market-based approach. Finally, it will allow all of us to observe, acknowledge, and address any societal issues that arise much faster. Having more eyes on the problems will lead to more impactful solutions that can be built directly into this protocol, making the network far more secure and resilient.

A decentralized, open source protocol for social media is our vision and work for the long term. We continue the cycle mentioned earlier of constantly improving our approach to content moderation in the short term. I hope our discussion today will focus on more enduring solutions.

One final note: We are a bunch of humans with a desire to make the world around us better for everyone living today and those that come after us. We make mistakes in prioritization and in execution. We commit to being open about these and doing our best to remedy what we control.

We appreciate the enormous privilege we have in building technologies to host some of the world's most important conversations, and we honor the desire to create better outcomes or everyone who interacts with them.

Thanks for your time, and I look forward to the discussion.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Doyle follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********

*Mr. Doyle. Thank you, Mr. Dorsey.

Well, we have concluded witness opening statements. At this time we will move to member questions. I want to make sure that members are aware that our witnesses are being assisted by counsel, and during questions our witnesses may briefly mute themselves to seek advice of counsel, which is permitted.

Each member will have five minutes to start asking questions of our witnesses. I ask everyone to please adhere to that five-minute rule, as we have many people that want to ask questions. I will start by recognizing myself for five minutes.

*Mr. Duncan. Mr. Chairman, a point of order?

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman -- who is speaking?

*Mr. Duncan. This is Jeff Duncan. Point of order.

*Mr. Doyle. Yes, sir?

*Mr. Duncan. If the witnesses are advised by counsel and we are not swearing them in, why would they need counsel?

*Mr. Doyle. In previous hearings, we have always permitted witnesses to have counsel. Sometimes you will see them at a hearing just leaning back and talking to their counsel before a question. But it is allowed under our rules, and I just wanted to make members aware that they may mute themselves while that is going on.

*Mr. Duncan. They should be sworn in, but I yield back.

Thank you.

*Mr. Doyle. Okay. Gentlemen, my time is short, and I ask that you make your responses as brief and to the point as possible. If I ask you a yes or no question, I am just looking for a yes or no. So please respond appropriately.

I want to start by asking all three of you if your platform bears some responsibility for disseminating disinformation related to the election and the Stop the Steal movement that led to the attack on the Capitol. Just a yes or no answer. Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Chairman, I think our responsibility is to build systems that can help fight --

*Mr. Doyle. Mr. Zuckerberg, I just want a yes or no answer. Okay? Yes or no: Do you bear some responsibility for what happened?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, our responsibility is to make sure that we build effective systems to help fight the spread of --

*Mr. Doyle. Okay. The gentleman's preference is not to answer the question.

Mr. Pichai, yes or no?

*Mr. Pichai. We always feel a deep sense of responsibility. But I think we worked hard. This election effort was one of our most substantive efforts.

*Mr. Doyle. Is that a yes or a no?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, it is a complex question. We --

*Mr. Doyle. Okay. We will move on.

Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes. But you also have to take into consideration a broad ecosystem. It is not just about the technology platforms that are used.

*Mr. Doyle. Thank you. Thank you, and I agree with that.

Mr. Zuckerberg, independent analysis has shown that despite all the things that Facebook did during the election, users still interacted with election misinformation roughly 1.1 billion times over the last year. The initial Stop the Steal group started on Facebook and gained over 350,000 followers in less than a day, faster than almost any other in your platform's history, and they were immediately calling for violence.

In mid-December, you stopped promoting high-quality news outlets for election content, at a time when the disinformation was as its height. And finally, the FBI has released numerous documents showing that many of the insurrectionists used Facebook to coordinate and plan the attack on January 6th.

So my question is: How is it possible for you not to at least admit that Facebook played a central role or a leading

role in facilitating the recruitment, planning, and execution of the attack on the Capitol?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Chairman, my point is that I think that the responsibility here lies with the people who took the actions to break the law and take -- and do the insurrection.

And secondarily, also, the people who spread that content, including the President but others as well, with repeated rhetoric over time saying that the election was rigged and encouraging people to organize. I think that those people bear the primary responsibility as well. And that was the point that I was making.

*Mr. Doyle. I understand that. But your platforms supercharged that. You took what -- a thing and magnified it; in 12 hours you got 350,000 people in your site. You gin this up. Your algorithms make it possible to supercharge these kinds of opinions. I think we are here because of what these platforms enabled, how your choices put our lives and our democracy at risk. And many of us just find it just unacceptable.

I want to ask each of you another question. Do you think vaccines that have been approved for COVID-19 work? Just yes or no. Do you think the vaccines that have been approved work? Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Yes.

*Mr. Doyle. Mr. Pichai?

*Mr. Pichai. Yes. Absolutely.

*Mr. Doyle. Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes. But I don't think we are here to discuss our own personal opinions.

*Mr. Doyle. I just want to know if you think the vaccines work. Yes?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes. However --

*Mr. Doyle. Thank you. Okay. So if you think the vaccines work, why have your companies allowed accounts that repeatedly offend your vaccine disinformation policies to remain up? I mean, according to report, just 12 accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram account for 65 percent of all the vaccine disinformation on your platforms. You are exposing tens of millions of users to this every day. I don't have the states on YouTube, but my understanding is it is similar.

So my question is: Why, in the midst of a global pandemic that has killed over half a million Americans, that you haven't taken these accounts down that are responsibility for the preponderance of vaccine disinformation on your platforms? Will you all commit to taking these platforms down today? Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, yes, we do have a policy against allowing vaccine disinformation --

*Mr. Doyle. Oh, I know you have a policy, but will you take the sites down today? You still have 12 people up on your site doing this. Will you take them down?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I would need to look at the -- and have our team look at the exact examples to make sure they violate the policy --

*Mr. Doyle. Look at them today and get back to us tomorrow because those still exist. We found them as early as last night.

Mr. Pichai, how about you?

*Mr. Pichai. We have removed over 850,000 videos and we --

*Mr. Doyle. But have you removed them all? Do you still have people that are spreading disinformation on your platforms? There are about 12 superspreaders.

*Mr. Pichai. We have clear policies and we take down content. Some of the content is allowed if it is people's personal experiences. But we definitely --

*Mr. Doyle. Okay. Thank you. Mr. Dorsey? I see my time is getting expired. Mr. Dorsey? Will you take these sites down? You got about 12 superspreaders. Will you take them down?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes. We remove everything against our policy.

*Mr. Doyle. Thank you.

I see my time is expired. I will now yield to the ranking member, Mr. Latta, for his five minutes.

*Mr. Latta. I thank my friend for yielding.

Amanda Todd was just 15 years old when she hung herself. Amanda met a man online, who took inappropriate screenshots of Amanda, and proceeded to follow her around the internet and harass her for years. He found her classmates on Facebook and he would send them the picture he took of her. To cope with the anxiety, Amanda turned to drugs and alcohol. But it became too much for her.

Mr. Zuckerberg, clearly Ms. Todd was underage, so the photo that was shared to harass her was illegal. Do you believe that Facebook bears any responsibility for the role it played in her death? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sorry, I was muted. Congressman, that is a -- it is an incredibly sad story. And I think that we certainly have a responsibility to make sure that we are building systems that can fight and remove this kind of harmful content. In the case of child exploitation content, we have been building systems for a long time that use AI, and we have thousands of people working on being able to identify this content and remove it, and I think our systems are generally pretty effective at this. And I think it is our responsibility to make sure that we keep improving them.

*Mr. Latta. My time -- my time is pretty short, but

would you say yes or no then?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sorry. Can you repeat that?

*Mr. Latta. Well, in the question, yes or no, then? Any responsibility?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I believe that the responsibility of the platform --

*Mr. Latta. Okay. Well, let me move on because I have got -- I am very short on time.

Do you believe that Facebook should be held accountable for any role in her death? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, the responsibility that I think platforms should have --

*Mr. Latta. Okay.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. -- is to build effective systems to moderate this content.

*Mr. Latta. I am going to have to move on. I am going to have to take it that you are just not responding to the question.

Unfortunately, stories like Amanda Todd's are only becoming more common. While we all can talk about how your platforms can be used for good or evil, the evil seems to persevere.

Mr. Zuckerberg, you stated that you support thought changes to Section 230 to ensure that tech companies are held accountable for certain actions that happen on their

platforms, such as child exploitation. What specific changes do you support in Section 230?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Thanks, Congressman. I would support two specific changes, especially for large platforms, although I want to call out that I think for smaller platforms, I think we need to be careful about any changes that we made that remove their immunity because that could hurt competition. So let me just call on these for larger platforms.

I think, first, platforms should have to issue transparency reports that state the prevalence of content across all different categories of harmful content, everything from child exploitation to terrorism to incitement of violence to intellectual property violations to pornography, whatever the different harms are, and --

*Mr. Latta. Well, let me ask real quick now, where are those transparency reports you are being reported to, and how often do you think that should be going out?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Oh, Congressman, as a model, Facebook has been doing something to this effect for every quarter, where we report on the prevalence of each category of harmful content and how effective our system are at identifying that content and removing it in advance. And I think the company should be held accountable for having effective systems to do that broadly.

The second change that I would propose is creating accountability for the large platforms to have effective systems in place to moderate and remove clearly illegal content, so things like sex trafficking or child exploitation or terrorist content. And I think it would be reasonable to condition immunity for the larger platforms on having a generally effective system in place to moderate clearly illegal types of content.

*Mr. Latta. Let me interrupt real quick because I am running really short on time. Because I know in your testimony you are talking about that you would -- you say that platforms should not be held liable if a particular piece of content evades its detection.

So again, that is one of the areas when you are talking about the transparency and also the accountability I would like to follow up on.

Let me ask you real quick, Mr. Pichai, yes or no: Do you agree with Mr. Zuckerberg's changes to Section 230?

*Mr. Pichai. There are definitely good proposals around transparency and accountability, which I have seen in various legislative proposals as well, which I think are important principles and we would certainly welcome legislative approaches in that area.

*Mr. Latta. Okay. Mr. Doyle, do you agree with Mr. Zuckerberg? Yes or no? On the changes on 230?

*Mr. Dorsey. I think the ideas around transparency are good. I think it is going to be very hard to determine what is a large platform and a small platform, and it may incentivize the wrong things.

*Mr. Doyle. Okay. The gentleman's time is expired.

*Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. My time is expired, and I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The chair now recognizes Chair Schakowsky, chair of the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, for five minutes.

*Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you so much.

Mr. Zuckerberg, immediately after the Capitol insurgency, Sheryl Sandberg did an interview in which she insisted that the siege was largely planned on smaller platforms, that -- but the court filings actually show something quite the opposite, that the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers used Facebook to coordinate in real time during the siege.

And so my question for you is: Will you admit today that Facebook groups, in particular, played a role in fomenting the extremism that we saw and that led to the Capitol siege?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, thanks for the question on this. In the comment that Sheryl made, what I believe that we were trying to say was -- and what I stand behind --

is what was widely reported at the time, that after January 6th --

*Ms. Schakowsky. No. But I am sorry to interrupt, as many of my colleagues have had to do because we only have five minutes. But would you say that -- and would you admit that Facebook played a role?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I think certainly there was content on our services, and from that perspective, I think that there is further work that we need to do to make our services and moderation more effective.

*Ms. Schakowsky. I have heard that. Okay. I am going to ask Mr. Pichai a question.

Many companies have used Section 230 as a shield to escape consumer protection laws. And I have a bill that would actually not protect companies that do that. And so, Mr. Pichai, would you agree that that that would be proper use, to not allow liability protection for those who violate consumer protection laws?

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, consumer protection laws are very important areas, like we comply with COPPA and HIPAA. I think the right approach is to have legislation in applicable areas, and have us --

*Ms. Schakowsky. Okay. I am going to have to interrupt again. Is that a yes, that if a law has been broken, a consumer protection law, that it would not -- there would not

be liability protection under Section 230 for you?

*Mr. Pichai. We rely on the liability protections to actually take strong action in, particularly, new types of content. When the Christchurch shooting happens, within a few minutes our teams have to make decisions about the content to take down. That certainty is what we rely on.

But I agree with you that we should have strong consumer protection laws and be subject to it, and have agencies like the FTC have clear oversight over those laws and how we comply with them.

*Ms. Schakowsky. Let me just ask a real -- thank you -- a real yes or no, quickly. Do you think that when you take money to run advertisements that promote disinformation, that you are exempt from liability? Yes or no? Yes or no?

*Mr. Pichai. Section 230 --

*Ms. Schakowsky. Mr. Zuckerberg? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I don't know the legal answer to that. But we don't allow misinformation in our ads. And any ad that has been fact-checked as false, we don't allow it to run as an ad.

*Ms. Schakowsky. Okay. And Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. Again, I also would need to review the legal precedent for it. But we would not allow that.

*Ms. Schakowsky. Okay. And Mr. Pichai?

*Mr. Pichai. We are subject to FTC's Deceptive Ad

Practices, so there are statutes which apply to us. We removed over 3 billion bad ads last year alone.

*Ms. Schakowsky. Okay. Let me ask one more question: Do you think that Section 230 should be expanded to trade agreements that are being made, as happened in the U.S. trade agreement with Mexico and Canada? Yes or no? Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, my primary goal would be to help update Section 230 to reflect the kind of modern reality in what we have learned over 25 years. But that said, I do still think that Section 230 plays a foundational role in the development of the internet, and the company is getting bilked, so I do think that we should support it.

*Ms. Schakowsky. I hear you. But I am talking now about trade agreements. Mr. Pichai?

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, I think there is value in it. But if there are evolution of Section 230, that should apply. And so in a flexible way, being able to do that would be good, I think.

*Ms. Schakowsky. Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. I don't fully understand the ramifications of what you are suggesting. So I would have to review any --

*Ms. Schakowsky. I am saying to have a liability shield that would be international and clarify it in trade agreements. And I think it is a bad idea.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady's time has expired.

*Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you. I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The chair now recognizes Mr. Bilirakis, ranking member of the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, for five minutes.

*Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

Mr. Dorsey, you have heard briefly about what I am hearing again my district. My opening remarks, you have heard them. The other key part with these stories that we are hearing when we conduct these surveys is how we empower law enforcement.

In a hearing last year, we received testimony that since 2016, Twitter has intentionally curtailed sharing threat data with law enforcement fusion centers. Here is the question: You are well aware that on Twitter and Periscope, that traffic has increased from bad actors seeking to groom children for molestation, lure females into sex trafficking, sell illegal drugs, incite violence, and even threaten to murder police officers.

Are you willing to reinstate this cooperation, retain evidence, and provide law enforcement the tools to protect our most vulnerable? Yes or no?

*Mr. Dorsey. Well, first, child sexual exploitation has no place on our platform, and I don't believe that is true.

We work with local law enforcement regularly.

*Mr. Bilirakis. So you are saying that this is not true, what I am telling you? Are you willing to reinstate -- reinstate; in other words, it is not going on now -- reinstate this cooperation with law enforcement to retain evidence and provide law enforcement the tools to protect our most vulnerable?

*Mr. Dorsey. We would love to work with you in more detail on what you are seeing. But we work with law enforcement regularly. We have a strong partnership.

*Mr. Bilirakis. So you are saying that this is not true, what I am telling you?

*Mr. Bilirakis. I don't believe so. But I would love to understand the specifics.

*Mr. Pichai. Will you commit to doing what I am telling you you are not doing in the future, and work with me on this?

*Mr. Dorsey. We will commit to continue doing what we are doing.

*Mr. Bilirakis. And what is that? You are saying that the -- so in other words --

*Mr. Dorsey. Working with the local law enforcement.

*Mr. Bilirakis. Okay. Well, let me go on to the next question. But I am going to follow up with this to make sure you are doing this. I mean, our children's lives are in

jeopardy here.

Mr. Zuckerberg, we have heard you acknowledge mistakes about your products before. There are now media reports of an Instagram for under-13 being launched. My goodness. Between this and YouTube Kids, you and Mr. Pichai have obviously identified a business case for targeting this age bracket with content, and I find that very concerning, targeting this particular age bracket, 13 and under.

Given these free services, how exactly would you be making money, or are you trying to monetize our children, too, and get them addicted early? And will you be allowing your own children to use this site with the default settings? We are talking about, again, the site that apparently is being launched for children 13 and under, or under 13, actually. Can you please answer that question for me?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, we are early in thinking through how this service would work. There is clearly a large number of people under the age of 13 who would want to use a service like Instagram. We currently do not allow them to do that. I think the offer --

*Mr. Bilirakis. What would be beneficial to our children to launch this kind of service?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Well, Congressman, I think helping people stay connected with friends and learn about different content online is broadly positive. There are clearly issues

that need to be thought through and worked out, including how parents can control the experience of kids, especially kids under the age of 13. And we haven't worked through all of that yet, so we haven't kind of formally announced the plans. But I think that something like this could be quite helpful for a lot of people.

*Mr. Bilirakis. Excuse me. Okay, I will reclaim my time.

Mr. Pichai, your company has had failures to rating content for kids. What advice would you offer your challenge here?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, we have invested a lot in a one-of-a-kind product, YouTube Kids. The content there is -- we work with trusted content partners. Think Sesame Street as an example of the type of channel you would find there, science videos and cartoons. And we take great effort to make sure --

*Mr. Bilirakis. I need to reclaim my time. I have one more -- one last question for Mr. Zuckerberg.

Do you have concerns with what has appeared on your platform hosted by YouTube? And with regard to your children, about -- in general. Do you have concerns, yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, are you asking me about YouTube?

*Mr. Bilirakis. Yes. I am asking you about YouTube.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I use YouTube to watch educational videos with my children, and --

*Mr. Bilirakis. Do you have concerns? First, for your children and your family personally? Do you have concerns?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Well, Congressman, my children are 5 and 3 years old. So when I watch content on YouTube with them, I am doing it and supervising them. So in that context, no. I haven't particularly had concerns. But I think it is important that if anyone is building a service for kids under the age of 13 to use by themselves, that there are appropriate parental controls.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

*Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you.

*Mr. Doyle. I would ask all members to try to stick to our five-minute rule so that we can get out of here before midnight.

The chair will not recognize Mr. Pallone, the full committee chair, for five minutes.

*The Chairman. Thank you, Chairman Doyle. My questions are of Mr. Zuckerberg and Mr. Pichai. But I just want to say, after listening to the two of you's testimony, you definitely give the impression that you don't think that you are actively in any way promoting this misinformation and extremism. And I totally disagree with that.

You are not passive bystanders. You are not nonprofits or religious organizations that are trying to do a good job for humanity. You are making money. And the point we are trying to make today, or at least I am, is that when you spread disinformation, misinformation, extremism, actively promoted and amplified, you do it because you make more money.

And so I kind of deny the basic premise of what you said. But let me get to the questions. Let me ask Mr. Zuckerberg: [redacted] I wrote to you last month requesting this research and related documents. I trust you will fully cooperate with the committee's inquiry and provide all requested documents and information.

But my question is, and please yes or no: Were you aware of this research showing that 64 percent of the members in the extremist Facebook groups studied join because of Facebook's own recommendations to join these extremist groups in Germany? Were you aware of that, yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, this is something that we study because we want to make sure our products --

*The Chairman. But I am asking whether you were aware

of it. It is a simple question. Yes or no: Were you aware of it? That is all I am asking. Were you aware of it?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Aware at what time? After we studied that --

*The Chairman. I just asked if you were aware of it, Mr. Zuckerberg. Yes or no? If not, I am going to assume that the answer is yes. Okay?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I have seen the study. It was about a --

*The Chairman. All right. So your answer is yes.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. -- contest leading up to the German election. And we have since --

*The Chairman. I appreciate that. Let me go to the final question, which relates to that. You said yes. Okay.

The troubling research I mentioned demonstrates that Facebook was not simply allowing disinformation and extremism to spread, it actively amplified it and spread it. This is my point. Nonetheless, Facebook didn't permanently stop permanently stop recommending political and civil groups to the United States until after the January 6th insurrection, years after it was made aware of this research.

The fact that Facebook's own recommendation system helped populate extremist groups compels us to reevaluate platforms' liabilities. N[redacted]

Facebook's chief product officer, Chris Cox, championed an internal effort to address division on Facebook and proposed a plan that would have reduced the spread of content by hyperactive users on the far left and far right. The article alleges, Mr. Zuckerberg, that you personally reviewed this proposal and approved it, but only after its effectiveness was decreased to 80 percent.

Is that true? Yes or no, please?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, we have made a lot of measures that -- to fight this content, including --

*The Chairman. Did you approve it after its effectiveness was decreased to 80 percent? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I can't speak to that specific example. But we have put in place a lot of different measures, and I think that they are effective, including --

*The Chairman. Did you review the proposal and approve it?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, we do a lot of work in this area and I review a lot of proposals and we move forward on a lot of steps.

*The Chairman. It is not a difficult question. I am just asking if you reviewed this internal proposal and you approved it. And you won't even answer that. It is so easy to answer that question. It is very specific.

All right. You won't answer. Right? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, that is not what I said. I said I did review that in addition to many other proposals and things that we have taken action on.

*The Chairman. You whether or not --

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Including shutting off recommendations for civic and political groups.

*The Chairman. Did you approve it with the 80 percent decrease in effectiveness?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I don't remember that specifically. But we have taken a number of different --

*The Chairman. Okay. Let me --

*Mr. Zuckerberg. -- steps on this.

*The Chairman. Let me go to Mr. Pichai. Mr. Pichai, [redacted] In fact, a former designed emphasis at Google was quoted as saying, "If I am YouTube and I want you to watch more, I am always going to steer you towards Crazy Town.''

Mr. Pichai, is YouTube's recommendation algorithm designed to encourage users to stay on the site? Yes or no? Is it designed to encourage users to stay on the site? Yes or no?

*Mr. Pichai. Content responsibilities are our number

one goal, so that trumps everything.

*The Chairman. I am only asking, very simple, whether YouTube's recommendation algorithm is designed to encourage users to stay on the site. Simple question. Yes or no.

*Mr. Pichai. That is not the sole goal, Congressman. That would definitely --

*The Chairman. So the answer is yes. Okay. So the bottom line is, simply put, your company's bottom line compels you to amplify extremist and dangerous content. You are not bystanders. And what happens online doesn't stay online. It has real-world consequences. That is why Congress has to act, because you are not bystanders. You are encouraging this stuff.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Ms. Rodgers, the full committee ranking member, for five minutes.

*Ms. Rodgers. We tragically lost a number of young people to suicide in my community. In a 3-year period from 2013 to 2016, the suicide rate more than doubled in Spokane County. In the last six months, one high school lost three teens. Right now suicide is the second leading cause of death in the entire State of Washington for teens 15 to 19 years old.

As I mentioned, it has led to many painful conversations

trying to find some healing for broken families and communities. And together we have been asking, what has left our kids with a deep sense of brokenness? Why do children, including kids we have lost in middle school, feel so empty at such a young, vulnerable age?

Well, some studies are confirming what parents in my community already know: Too much time on screens and social media is leading to loneliness and despair. And it seems to be an accepted truth in the tech industry because what we are hearing today: Making money is more important.

Bill Gates put a cap on screen time for his daughter. Steve Jobs once said in a quote, "We limit how much technology our kids use at home.'' Mr. Zuckerberg, you have also said that your kids -- or you don't want your kids sitting in front of screens passively consuming content.

So Mr. Zuckerberg, yes or no: Do you agree too much time in front of screens, passively consuming content, is harmful to children's mental health?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, the research that I have seen on this suggests that if people are using computers and social --

*Ms. Rodgers. Could you answer yes or no? I am sorry. Could you use yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. I don't think that the research is conclusive on that. But I can summarize what I have learned,

if that is helpful.

*Ms. Rodgers. I will follow up at a later time because I do know that Facebook has acknowledged that passive consumption on your platform is leading to people feeling worse. And you said that going from video to video is not positive. Yet Facebook is designed to keep people scrolling. Instagram is designed to get users to go from video to video.

So I would like to ask you if you said earlier that you don't want kids sitting in front of the screens passively consuming content, and your products are designed to increase screen time, do you currently have any limitations on your own kids' use of your products, or how do you think that will change as they get older?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sure, Congresswoman. My daughters are 5 and 3 and they don't use our products. Actually, that is not exactly true; my eldest daughter, Max, I let her use Messenger Kids sometimes to message her cousins. But overall, the research that we have seen is that using social apps to connect with other people can have positive mental health benefits and well-being benefits by helping people feel more connected and less lonely.

Passively consuming content doesn't have those positive benefits to well-being but isn't necessarily negative. It just isn't as positive as connecting. And the way we design our algorithms is to encourage meaningful social

interactions. So it is a common misconception that our teams -- our goals, or even have goals, of trying to increase the amount of time that people spend.

The News Feed team at Facebook and the Instagram team

*Ms. Rodgers. Thank you, Mr. Zuckerberg. I do have a couple more questions.

So do you agree that your business model and the design of your products is to get as many people on the platform as possible and to keep them there for as long as possible? If you could answer yes or no, that would be great.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, from a mission perspective, we want to serve everyone. But our goal is not -- we don't -- I don't give our News Feed team or our Instagram team goals around increasing the amount of time that people spend. I believe that if we build a useful product which --

*Ms. Rodgers. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. We all have limited time. I think the business model suggests that it is true.

It was mentioned earlier that you are studying extremism. I would like to ask, yes or no, of all of you, beginning with Mr. Zuckerberg: Has Facebook conducted any internal research as to the effect your products are having on the mental health of our children?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I know that this is

something that we try to study, and I am --

*Ms. Rodgers. Can you say yes or no? I am sorry.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. I believe the answer is yes.

*Ms. Rodgers. Okay. Mr. Doyle, has Twitter?

*Mr. Dorsey. I don't believe so, but we will follow up with you.

*Ms. Rodgers. Okay. Mr. Pichai, has Google conducted any research on the effect your products are having on the mental health of children?

*Mr. Pichai. We consult widely with expert third parties on this area, including SAMHSA and other mental health organizations, and invest a lot of time and effort in this area.

*Ms. Rodgers. Okay. I would like to see that. It sounds like you have studied extremism. Let's get focused on our children.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Rush for five minutes. Bobby, you need to unmute. There you go. Nope, you are still muted.

*Mr. Rush. I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman. We all agree that social media sites should not be tools for stoking racial division or exacerbating racial injustice. However, there is a broad finding of research that demonstrates the disproportionate effects of disinformation and white

supremacy extremism on women and people of color, especially black people.

We have seen, and continue to see, that too often social media sites put their earnings before equality. Simply stated, your corporations carelessly put profits over people. Misinformation, outlandish conspiracy theories, and incendiary content targeting minorities remains firmly, and social media companies, your companies, are profiting from hate and racism on these platforms by harnessing data and generating advertising revenue from such content.

There is only one comparison that remotely approaches the avarice and moral discrepancy of your companies, and that is the slavetocracy burden of our Nation's shameful and inhumane and most difficult dark days in the past.

This is the very reason why I ask Mr. Dorsey, I remember you at our 2018 hearing to commit to commissioning and independent third party civil rights audit of Twitter. This response at the hearing was followed up with a joint letter from Chairman Pallone and myself confirming that commitment.

It is three years later, and I am still waiting, Mr. Dorsey, for the results of that audit. Where is that audit, Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. Thank you. We have taken another approach, which is to work with civil rights orgs on a regular basis. We have regular conversations with civil

rights orgs multiple times a year.

*Mr. Rush. Mr. Dorsey, where is the audit that Members of Congress, including the chairman of the committee -- where is the audit that we asked you and you agreed to forward?

*Mr. Dorsey. We don't have it. We sought a different approach with --

*Mr. Rush. I don't have it, either, and I thought that you were being very, very disingenuous. As a matter of fact, I thought that you had lied to the committee and you should be condemned for that. And I can't wait until we come up with legislation that will deal with you and your cohorts in a very, very effective way. This was nothing but an empty promise that you made.

You haven't taken this issue seriously, and Mr. Dorsey I as a black man in America, my experiences are different from your experiences. This audit is very, very important to me and to those who are similarly situated just as I am. Facebook, to their credit, has completed an audit. And there is no reason, simply no reason under the sun, that corporation as large as yours should not have completed that audit.

Mr. Dorsey, has Twitter evaluated the disparate impact from COVID-19 misinformation on the African American community, and simply has not even attempted to identify messages to combat COVID-19 misinformation targeted at

African Americans and emphasized reliable, trustworthy medical information?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes on both. And we review with civil rights orgs on a regular basis. That is the solution we chose.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Upton for five minutes.

*Mr. Upton. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I listen to this hearing, like it or not, it sounds like everybody on both sides of the aisle is not very happy. I think we all believe that there is a lot of responsibility that should be shared for some of the issues that we have raised today by the three of you. And I would just offer -- or speculate, I guess you could say -- that we are going to see some changes in Section 230.

The President, former President Trump, vetoed a pretty big bill, the defense bill, earlier last year over this very issue because he wanted the total repeal and he didn't get it. But I know that the Senate now has got some legislation that is pending that is looking at a couple reforms. And my sense is that we may see something here in the near future as well.

I serve as one of only two House members on the Commission on Combating Synthetic Opioid Trafficking. It is a multi-Federal agency. It is co-chaired by David Trone in

the House and Tom Cotton in the Senate. And there is a lot of concern that we all have, not only as parents but as community leaders across the country, on opioids and the inability to remove illegal offers of opioids, steroids, even fake COVID-19 vaccines. Very troubling, I think, as we see some of these platforms push such content to a user in real search of it.

So I guess my first question is to you, Mr. Zuckerberg. The sale of illegal drugs on your platform does violate your policy, yet it does remain a problem on your platforms. Can you explain the resources that you currently have devoted to addressing the issue and whether or not you plan to develop more? And this is an issue that I intend to raise with the Commission as we look forward to this in the next number of months.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Thanks, Congressman. I think this is an important area and a good question. We have more than a thousand engineers who work on our what we call integrity systems that basically are AI systems that try to help find content that violates our policies. You are right that that content does violate our policies. And we also have more than 35,000 people who work in content review who basically are either responding to flags that they get from the community or checking things that our AI systems flag for them but are unsure about.

And this is an area -- and when we are talking about reforming Section 230 -- where I think it would be reasonable to expect that large platforms, especially, build effective systems to be able to combat and fight this kind of clearly illegal content. I think that there will be a lot of ongoing debate about how to handle content which people find distasteful or maybe harmful but is legal. But in this case, when the content is illegal, I think it is pretty reasonable to expect that large platforms build effective systems for moderating this.

*Mr. Upton. So we saw earlier this week -- of course, we don't know all the facts on this terrible shooting in Boulder, Colorado. It appears, at least some of the initial reports, that the alleged shooter was in fact bullied, and I think I saw some press reports that some of it had happened online as well.

What process do you have that would allow parents or families to be able to pursue anti-bullying efforts that might be on your platforms?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Thanks, Congressman. I think bullying is a really important case to consider for Section 230 because, first of all, it is horrible, and we need to fight it, and we have policies that are against it. But it also is often the case that bullying content is not clearly illegal.

So when we talk about needing the ability under

something like Section 230 to be able to moderate content which is not only clearly illegal content but broader, one of the primary examples that we have in mind is making sure that we can stop people from bullying children. And here we work with a number of advocacy groups. We work with law enforcement to help fight this. This is a huge effort and part of what we do, and I think it is extremely important.

*Mr. Upton. And other than taking the approach that you don't want to see any changes to 230, what suggestions might you have for us as we examine this issue?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sorry, Congressman. I am not saying that I don't think that there should be changes. I am saying that I think 230 still broadly is important, so I wouldn't repeal the whole thing.

But the three changes that I have basically suggested are -- one is around transparency, that large platforms should have to report on a regular cadence, for each category of harmful content, how much of that harmful content they are finding and how effective their systems are at dealing with it.

The second thing I think that we should do is hold large platforms to a standard where they should have effective systems for handling clearly illegal content, like opioids or child exploitation or things like that.

And the threshold thing that I think is an important

principle is that these policies really do need to apply more to large platforms. And I think we need to find a way to exempt small platforms so that way -- when I was getting started with Facebook, if we had gotten hit with a lot of lawsuits around content, it might have been prohibitive for me to get started. And I think none of us here want to see the next set of platforms from being stopped from kind of being able to get started and grow.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Ms. Eshoo.

*Ms. Eshoo. Am I unmuted? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And good morning -- well, it is still -- we are Californians, so it is good morning for us.

I want to start by saying that content moderation, like removing posts or banning accounts, is about treating symptoms. And I think that we need to treat symptoms, but I also think that we need to address two underlying diseases. The first is that your products amplify extremism. The second is that your business models of targeted ads enable misinformation to thrive because you chase user engagement at great cost to our society.

So to Mr. Pichai, last month the Anti-Defamation League found that YouTube amplifies extremism. Scores of journalists and researchers agree. And here is what they say happens: A user watching an extremist video is often

recommended more such videos, slowly radicalizing the user. YouTube is not doing enough to address recommendations, and it is why Representative Malinowski and myself introduced the Protecting Americans from Dangerous Algorithms Act to narrowly amend Section 230 so courts can examine the role of algorithmic amplification that leads to violence.

And it is also why I, along with 40 of my House colleagues, wrote to each of you about this issue. And Mr. Chairman, I ask that those letters be placed into the record.

[The letters to Mr. Pichai referred to follow:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********

*Ms. Eshoo. So my question to you, Mr. Pichai, is: Are you willing to overhaul YouTube's core recommendation engine to correct this issue? Yes or no?

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, we have overhauled our recommendation systems, and I know you have engaged on these issues before, pretty substantially in pretty much any area.

*Ms. Eshoo. Now, Mr. Pichai, yes or no, because we still have a huge problem. And I outlined what they -- are you saying that the Anti-Defamation League doesn't know what they are talking about? All these journalists and researchers? There is a lot more to address. And that is why I am asking you if you are willing to overhaul YouTube's core recommendation engine to correct this. It is serious. It is dangerous. What more can I say about it? Yes or no?

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, if I may explain, we have --

*Ms. Eshoo. No. I don't have time to explain. So we -- let me just say this to the witnesses. We don't do filibuster in the House. That is something that is done in the Senate. So a filibuster doesn't work with us.

To Mr. Zuckerberg, your algorithms use unseemly amounts of data to keep users on your platform because that leads to more ad revenue. Now, businesses are in business to make money. We all understand that. But your model has a cost to society. The most engaging posts are often those that induce

fear, anxiety, anger, and that includes deadly, deadly misinformation.

The Center for Countering Digital Hate found that the "Explore'' and "Suggested Posts'' parts of Instagram are littered with COVID misinformation, election disinformation, and QAnon posts. So this is dangerous, and it is why Representative Schakowsky and I are doing a bill that is going to ban this business model of surveillance advertising.

So are you willing to redesign your products to eliminate your focus on addicting users to your platforms at all costs? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, as I said before, the teams that design our algorithm --

*Ms. Eshoo. Never mind. I think -- let me just say this, and I think it is irritating all of us, and that is that no one seems to know the word "yes'' or the word "no.'' Which one is it? If you don't want to answer, just say, "I don't want to answer.'' So yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, these are nuanced issues and --

*Ms. Eshoo. Okay. So I am going to say that is a no.

To Mr. Doyle, as chairwoman of the Health Subcommittee, I think that you need to eliminate all COVID misinformation and not label or reduce its spread but remove it. I looked at a tweet this morning. Robert Kennedy, Jr. links the death

of baseball legend Hank Aaron to the COVID vaccine even though fact-checkers debunked the story. The tweet has 9,000 retweets.

Will you take this down, and why haven't you? And also, why haven't you banned the 12 accounts that are spewing its deadly COVID misinformation? This could cost lives.

*Mr. Dorsey. No, we won't take it down because it didn't violate our policy. So we have a clear policy in place --

*Ms. Eshoo. What kind of policy is that? Is it a policy for misinformation?

*Mr. Dorsey. No.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady's time is expired.

The chair recognizes Mr. Scalise. Is Mr. Scalise here?

*Mr. Scalise. Thank you.

*Mr. Doyle. Ah, there we go.

*Mr. Scalise. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for having this hearing. I want to thank our three witnesses for coming as well. Clearly, you are seeing a lot of concern being expressed by members on both sides, both Republican and Democrat, about the way that your social media platforms are run, and especially as it relates to the fairness and equal treatment of people.

I know I have had a lot of concerns; shared it with some of you individually over the last few years about whether it

is algorithms that seem to be designed sometimes to have an anti-bias against conservatives. But look, we all agree that whether it is illegal activity, bullying, those things ought not to be permeated through social media.

There is a big difference between stopping bullying and violent type of social media posts versus actual censorship of political views that you disagree with. And I want to ask my first question to Mr. Dorsey because there have been a lot of concerns expressed recently about that inequal treatment.

[redacted] And for weeks, this very credibly sourced article, right before an election, about Hunter Biden was banned by Twitter.

[redacted]

I want to ask Mr. Dorsey, first of all, do you recognize that there is this real concern that there is an anti-conservative bias on Twitter's behalf? And would you

recognize that this has to stop if this has going to be -- Twitter is going to be viewed by both sides as a place where everybody is going to get a fair treatment?

[redacted] It was not to do with the content. It was to do with the hacked materials policy. We had an incorrect interpretation. we don't write policy according to any particular political leaning. If we find any of it, we rout it out.

*[redacted] --

*Mr. Dorsey. We will make mistakes. We will make mistakes, and our goal is to correct them as quickly as possible. And in that case, we did.

[redacted]. And to censor -- we have got a First Amendment, too. It just seems like to censor a newspaper that is as highly respected as the New York Post -- again, 1801, founded by Alexander Hamilton -- for their entire account to be blocked for two weeks by a mistake seems like a really big mistake.

Was anyone held accountable in your censoring department for that mistake?

*Mr. Dorsey. Well, we don't have a censoring department. But I agree. Like it --

*Mr. Scalise. Well, who made the decision, then, to block their account for two weeks?

*Mr. Dorsey. We didn't block their accounts for two weeks. We required them to delete the tweet and then they could tweet it again. They didn't take that action, so we corrected it for them. That was --

*Mr. Scalise. Even though the tweet was accurate. I mean, are you now -- look. You have seen the conversations on both sides about Section 230, and there is going to be more discussion about it. But you are acting as a publisher if you are telling a newspaper that they have got to delete something in order for them to be able to participate in your account.

I mean, don't you recognize that that -- you are no longer hosting a town square. You are acting as a publisher when you do that.

*Mr. Dorsey. It was literally just a process, sir. This was not against them in any particular way. We require -- if we remove a violation, we require people to correct it. We changed that based on their not wanting to delete that tweet, which I completely agree with. I see it. But it is something we learned. We learned to --

*Mr. Scalise. Okay. [redacted] --

[redacted] don't know if it was ever taken down. It contains false information. [redacted] Yet their tweets today on your service that still mischaracterize it in a way where even the Washington Post admitted it is wrong, yet those mischaracterizations can still be retweeted.

[redacted]

*Mr. Dorsey. Our misleading information policies are focused on manipulated media, public health, and civic integrity. That is it. We don't have a general --

*Mr. Scalise. I would hope that you would go and take that down. And look. I know you said in your opening statement, Mr. Dorsey, that Twitter is running a business, and you said, "A business wants to grow the customers it serves.'' Just recognize if you become viewed and continue to become viewed as an anti-conservatively biased platform, there will be other people that step up to compete and ultimately take millions of people from Twitter. I would hope you recognize that.

And I would yield back the balance of my time.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Butterfield for five minutes.

*Mr. Butterfield. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Zuckerberg, last year in response to the police killing of George Floyd, you wrote a post on your Facebook page that denounced racial bias. It proclaimed, "Black Lives Matter.'' You also announced that the company would donate [redacted] to racial justice organizations.

And Mr. Dorsey, Twitter changed its official bio to a Black Lives Matter tribute, and you pledged [redacted] to an anti-racism organization started by Colin Kaepernick. And Mr. Pichai, your company held a company-wide moment of silence to honor George Floyd, and you announced [redacted] in grants to racial justice organizations.

The CEO of Google subsidiary YouTube wrote in a blog post, "We believe Black Lives Matter and we all need to do more to dismantle systematic racism.'' YouTube also announced it would start a $100 million fund for black creators.

Now, all of this sounds nice. But there pronouncements, gentlemen, these pronouncements and money donations do not address the way your companies' own products, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, have been successfully weaponized by racists and are being used to undermine social justice movements, to suppress voting in communities of color, and

spread racist content and lies.

And so, gentlemen, in my view -- in my view your companies have contributed to the spread of race-based extremism and voter suppression. [redacted]'

Gentlemen, you could have made meaningful changes within your organizations to address the racial biases built into your products and donated to these organizations. But instead, we are left with platitudes and another round of passing the buck.

America is watching you today. This is a moment that begins a transformation of the way you do business, and you must understand that. Perhaps a lack of diversity within your organizations has contributed to these failures. The Congressional Black Caucus's Tech 2025 initiative has been working for years to increase diversity and equity in tech companies at all levels, and you know that because we have visited with you in California.

We founded this initiative in 2015 with the hope that by now, the tech workforce would reflect the diversity of our country. Here we are, 2021. I acknowledge that you have made some modest advancements, but enough. There must be

meaningful representation in your companies to design your products and services in ways that work for all Americans.

And that requires public accountability. History has shown that you have talked the talk but have failed to walk the walk. It appears now that Congress will have to compel you -- compel you, perhaps with penalties -- to make meaningful changes. And I am going to try the yes or no answer, and hopefully I will have better results than my colleagues.

Mr. Zuckerberg, I will start with you, and please be brief. Yes or no: Would you oppose legislation that would require technology companies to publicly report on workforce diversity at all levels?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I don't think so, but I need to understand it in more detail.

*Mr. Butterfield. Well, we will talk about that. And I hope that if we introduce this legislation, you will not oppose it.

What about you, Mr. Dorsey? Would you oppose a law that made workforce diversity reporting a requirement?

*Mr. Dorsey. No, I wouldn't oppose it. It does come with some complications in that we don't always have all the demographic data for our employees.

*Mr. Butterfield. Well, thank you for that, and we talked with you in your office some years ago and you made a

commitment to work with us, but we need more.

What about you, Mr. Pichai? Are you willing to support -- would you be willing to commit to -- would you oppose a law that made workforce diversity reporting a requirement? Would you oppose it?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, we were the first company to publish transparency reports. We publish it annually. And so happy to share that with you and take any feedback. But we do today provide, in the U.S., detailed demographic information on our workforce, and we are committed to doing better.

*Mr. Butterfield. Well, gentlemen, for last six years, the Congressional Black Caucus has said to you over and over again, we need greater diversity among your workforce from the top to the bottom, and we need for you to publish the data so the world can see it. That is the only way we are going to deal with diversity and equity.

Thank you so very much, Mr. Chairman. I heard you at the beginning of the committee gavel, and I yield back the 10 seconds that I have.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman deserves commendation for doing that, and I hope others follow his example.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Guthrie for five minutes.

*Mr. Guthrie. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the witnesses for being here.

And Big Tech decisions have real impact on people, and that is why I ask my constituents, using your platforms, to share their experiences on your platforms with me as their representative. And I am here to advocate on their behalf. I received 450 responses, and one major thing that I heard from my constituents was the experience they have had with sites taking down religious content, which is important because a lot of religious organizations are now streaming their services due to COVID.

I did have one instance where a constituent wrote to me -- and this is what she posted -- "I am thankful God's grace is new every morning.'' And then Facebook took it down, and then my constituent said she got a notice from Facebook that it violated their policies around hate.

And so I just want to discuss about this. I can ask you yes or no questions, Mr. Zuckerberg, on that, but I just want to talk about it a little bit. One is, it seems, I know that we don't want extreme language on the internet. I am with you on that. And you cannot watch everything. And so you use algorithms to find that, so algorithms will flag things, some that are clearly obvious and some that you would say probably shouldn't have been flagged.

But it seems to me that it seems to be biased in that direction. And so instead of just giving you a yes or no question, I want to read that quote again. And I sort of

know a little bit about math, not a lot but a little bit, about within that quote, what in there would get tripped up, with this quote get tripped up and put into the flagged category?

And as it says, "I am thankful God's grace is new every morning.'' And so I guess the question is what word or thought do you think would trip an algorithm for that quote, Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, it is not clear to me why that post would be a problem. I would need to look into it in more detail. Sometimes the systems look at patterns of posting, so if someone is posting a lot, then maybe our system thinks it is spam. But I would need to look into it in more detail.

Overall, the reality is that any system is going to make mistakes. There is going to be content that we take down that we should have left up, and there is going to be content that we missed that we should have taken down that we didn't catch or that the system has made mistake on. And at scale, unfortunately, those mistakes can be a large number even if it is a very small percent.

But that is why, when we are talking about things like Section 230 reform, I think it is reasonable to expect large companies to have effective moderation systems, but not reasonable to expect that there are never any errors. But I

think that transparency can help hold the companies accountable as to what accuracy and effectiveness they are achieving.

*Mr. Guthrie. Okay. Then, well, to your spam comment, I think they did receive a notify it was for the hate policy. And I understand there are going to be grey areas, whatever. But that quote, I don't see where the grey area is as to how it could get caught up in that.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. I agree.

*Mr. Guthrie. But I want to move on. Thanks for your answer with that. I want to move on.

So Mr. Dorsey, I want to talk about the RFK, Jr. I didn't see that quote, but you said that didn't violate your policy. And just in the context of that, I know CDC just recently updated its school guidance to make clear science says you can be three feet away and still be safe in schools. The issue -- things are changing every day because we are learning more and more about this virus.

So how did the RFK comment not violate your policy, RFK, Jr.? And how did -- we have an RFK III that we all -- and JFK and JPK III I guess we all like as a former colleague. But RFK, Jr., and the policy towards that. And then how do you keep up with what's changing so quickly, Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. We can follow up with you on the exact reasoning. But we have to recognize that our policies evolve

constantly and they have to evolve constantly. So as has been said earlier in this testimony, we observe what is happening as a result of our policy. We have got to understand the ramifications. And we improve it. And it is a constant cycle. We are always looking to improve our policies and our enforcement.

*Mr. Guthrie. So Mr. Zuckerberg, Mr. Pichai, just on all that continuously evolving information on COVID because we are learning more and more about it, how do you keep up? We only have about 30 seconds, so if you could -- quick answers for each of you, if you can. Mr. Pichai, maybe, since you haven't answered a question?

*Mr. Pichai. Yes. On COVID, we have been really taking guidance from CDC and other health experts, proactively removing information. One thing we get to do in YouTube is to recommend higher quality content. We have shown 400 billion information panels on COVID alone last year, including a lot from CDC and other health organizations.

*Mr. Guthrie. Okay. Thank you, and I will yield back four seconds, Mr. Chair.

*Mr. Doyle. Thank you, Mr. Guthrie.

The chair now recognizes Ms. Matsui for five minutes.

*Ms. Matsui. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for having this hearing today.

Today we have another opportunity, hearing from the

leaders of Facebook, Twitter, and Google, in what has become a concerning pattern. The members of this committee are here to demand answers to questions about social media's role in escalating misinformation, extremism, and violence.

Last week I testified at a House Judiciary Committee hearing about the rise in discrimination and violence against Asian Americans. Horrifically, that hearing came on the heels of a violent attack in Atlanta that left eight people, six of them Asian women, dead.

The issues we are discussing here are not abstract. They have real-world consequences and implementations that are too often measured in human lives. I am worried, as are many watching this hearing, that the companies before us today are not doing enough to prevent the spread of hate, especially when it is targeted against minority communities. Clearly the current approach is not working, and I think Congress must revisit Section 230.

A recent study from the University of San Francisco examined nearly 700,000 tweets in the week before and after President Trump tweeted the phrase "Chinese virus.'' The results showed two alarming trends: There was a significantly greater increase in hate speech the week after the President's tweet, and that half of the tweets used in the hashtag #chinavirus showed an anti-Asian sentiment compared to just one-fifth of the tweets using the hashtag

#covid19.

This empirical evidence backs up what the World Health Organization already knew in 2015, saying, "Disease names really do matter. We have seen certain disease names provoke a backlash against members of particularly religious or ethnic communities.'' Despite this, Facebook and Twitter are still allowing hashtags like #chinavirus, #kungflu, and #wuhanvirus to spread.

Mr. Zuckerberg and Mr. Dorsey, given the clear association between this type of language and racism or violence, why do you still allow these hashtags on your platforms? Anyone answer that, or is that not answerable?

*Mr. Dorsey. I think we were waiting for you to call on one of us. We do have policies against hateful conduct, and that includes the trends, so when we see associated with any hateful conduct, we will take action on it. It is useful to remember that a lot of these hashtags, though, do contain counter-speech, and people on the other side of it do own them and show why this is so terrible and why it needs to --

*Ms. Matsui. Can I just take my time back? The fact of the matter is I think you know how to develop algorithms to kind of get rid of this and examine this further.

Mr. Zuckerberg, any comment here?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Thanks, Congresswoman. The rise in anti-Asian hate is a really big issue and something that I do

think that we need to be proactive about. I agree with the comments that Jack made on this. On Facebook, any of that context, if it is combined with something that is clearly hateful, we will take that down. It violates the hate speech policy.

But one of the nuances that Jack highlighted that we certainly see as well in enforcing hate speech policy is that we need to be clear about when someone is saying something because they are using it in a hateful way versus when they are denouncing it. And this is one of the things that has made it more difficult to operationalize this at scale.

*Ms. Matsui. Well, reclaiming my time, I think this gives us an opportunity to really look at hate speech, what it really means, particularly in this day and age when we have many instances of these things happening. Hate speech on social media can be baked in, and unfortunately, this also is a trend that maybe happened years and years ago, which it might have just been a latent situation.

But with social media, it travels all around the world and it hurts a lot of people. And my feeling, and I believe a lot of other people's feeling, is that we really have to look at how we define hate speech. And you all are very brilliant people and you hire brilliant people. I would think that there is a way for you to examine this further and take it one step lower to see if it is something that is

legitimate or not.

And I really feel that this is a time, especially now when we are examining platforms and what you can do and should do, and as we are examining here in this committee and as we write legislation, we really want to have the entire multitude of what can and can't be done.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I only have 11 seconds left, and I yield back. Thank you.

*Mr. Doyle. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back.

Let's see. The chair now recognizes Mr. Kinzinger for five minutes.

*Mr. Kinzinger. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all for being here. In all this conversation it is good to have, I think we also have to recognize that we need to -- we are lucky to have all these companies located in the United States. When we talked about the issues and concerns, for instance, with TikTok, we can see that a lot of these companies could easily leave here and go elsewhere and then we would have far less oversight.

I think the crackdown on January 6 was correct. I think we need to be careful to not use that as a way to deflect from what led to January 6th, the pushing of this narrative of Stop the Steal. I think there are folks that are concerned, though, that we also need to make sure that those same levels of protection exist when you talk about like

Iran, for instance, and what the leaders there tweet. But let me go into specific questions.

Over the years we have obviously seen the rise of disinformation. It is not new; I remember getting disinformation in the 1990s. But we have seen it spread on these platforms. So we live in a digital world where many people get their news and entertainment from the internet, from articles and posts that are often based off algorithms that can cater to what people see and read.

So those constant News Feeds have simply reinforced people's beliefs, or worse, that they can promote disgraceful and utterly ridiculous conspiracy theories from groups like QAnon. Extremism and violence have grown exponentially as a result, and we know it is true specifically after January 6.

So Mr. Zuckerberg, let me ask you: According to Hany Farid at Berkeley, numerous external studies and some of your own internal studies have revealed that your algorithms are actively promoting divisive, hateful, and conspiratorial content because it engages users to spend more time.

Do you think those studies are wrong? And if not, what are you guys doing to reverse course on that?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sure. Thank you, Congressman. This is an important set of topics.

In terms of groups, we stopped recommending all civic and political groups even though I think a lot of the civic

and political groups are healthy, because we were seeing that that was one vector that there might be polarization or extremism, and groups might start off with one set of views but migrate to another place. So we have removed that completely. And we did it first as an exceptional measure during the election; and since the election, we have announced that we are going to extend that policy indefinitely.

For the rest of the content in News Feed and on Instagram, the main thing that I would say is I do think that there is quite a bit of misperception about how our algorithms work and what we optimize for. I have heard a lot of people say that we are optimizing for keeping people on the service.

The way that we view this is that we are trying to help people have meaningful social interactions. People come to social networks to be able to connect with people. If we deliver that value, then it will be natural that people use our services more. But that is very different from setting up algorithms in order to just kind of try to tweak and optimize and get people to spend every last minute on our service, which is not how we designed the company or the services.

*Mr. Kinzinger. Thanks. I don't mean to interrupt you. I do have another question.

[redacted]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********

*Mr. Kinzinger. Let me move on to the next one. For years I have called for increased consumer protection from companies on fake accounts and bad actors who use them to exploit others. This issue affected me personally; in 2015, a woman from India spent all of her money on a flight to come see me because she claimed to have developed a relationship with me over Facebook.

In 2019 I sent you, Mr. Zuckerberg, a letter highlighting the issue, and your team provided a relatively inadequate response. Since then, I have introduced two pieces of legislation, Social Media Accountability and Account Verification Act, and the Social Media Fraud Mitigation Act, both of which aimed to curb this activity.

So Mr. Zuckerberg, the last time you came before us, you stated that Facebook has a responsibility to protect its users. Do you feel that your company is living up to that? And further, what have you done to remove those fake accounts?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Thanks. So fake accounts are one of the bigger integrity issues that we face. I think in the first half of -- well, in the last half of last year, we took down more than a billion fake accounts, just to give you a sense of the volume, although most of those our systems are able to identify within seconds or minutes of them signing up because the accounts just don't behave in a way that a normal

person would in using the service.

But this is certainly one of the highest priority issues we have. We see a large prevalence of it. Our systems, I think, at this point are pretty effective in fighting it, but they are not perfect, and there are still a few percent that get through. And it is a big issue and one we will continue working on.

*Mr. Kinzinger. Thank you. I would love to ask the rest -- the others a question, but I don't have time. So I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your attention.

*Mr. Doyle. I thank the gentleman.

The chair now recognizes Ms. Castor for five minutes.

*Ms. Castor. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, since you were last here in front of the committee, the illegal activities, the expanse of unwitting Americans, the rampant misinformation on your platforms, have gotten worse. Part of the reason for this toxic stew is that you employ manipulative methods to keep people cemented to the platform, often amplifying discord. And it boosts your bottom line. You enjoy an outdated liability should that incentivizes you to look the other way or take half measures while you make billions at the expense of our kids, our health, the truth, and now we have seen the very foundation of our democracy.

I have been working for over a year with advocates and

other members on an update to the children's protections online. You all know the tracking and manipulation of children under age 13 is against the law, but Facebook, Google, YouTube, and other platforms have broken that law or have found ways around it. Many half been sanctioned for knowingly and illegally harvesting personal information of children and profiting from it.

I have a question for each of you, just a quick yes or no: Did you all watch "The Social Dilemma,'' where former employees or yours or other Big Tech platforms say they do not allow their kids on social media? Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I haven't seen it --

*Ms. Castor. Yes or --

*Mr. Zuckerberg. -- but I am obviously familiar with it.

*Ms. Castor. Okay. Mr. Pichai? Yes or no?

*Mr. Pichai. Yes. I have seen the movie.

*Ms. Castor. And --

*Mr. Dorsey. No. No.

*Ms. Castor. Okay. Well, Mr. Zuckerberg, there is a good reason that they have the former execs say that. Are you aware of the 2019 Journal of the American Medical Association pediatric study that the risk of depression for adolescents rises with each daily hour spent on social media? And I am not talking screen time. I am not talking about

Facetime or sending text messages to friends. But are you aware of that research?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I am not aware of that research.

*Ms. Castor. All right. What about the 2019 HHS research that suicide rates among kids aged 10 to 14 increased by 56 percent between 2007 and 2017 and tripled -- tripled -- for kids between the age of 10 and 14? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I am aware of the issue --

*Ms. Castor. Yes. So yes. Certainly you are also aware of the research that indicates a correlation between the rise in hospital admissions for self-harm and the prevalence of social media on phones and the apps on platforms that are designed to be addictive and keep kids hooked. Yes?

[No response.]

*Ms. Castor. Well, how about you, Mr. Pichai? Are you aware of the JAMA pediatric September 2020 study where they tested hundreds of apps used by children aged 5 and under, many of which were in the Google Play Store's family section? The study found 67 percent of the apps tested showed transmission of identifying info to third parties in violation of the COPPA law? Are you familiar?

*Mr. Pichai. Extensively spent time on this area. We

introduced a curated set of apps on the Play Store. We give digital well-being tools so that people can take a break, set time patterns, can set time limits for children. So the concept of --

*Ms. Castor. Let me ask you this, then, Mr. Pichai. How much are you making in advertising revenue from children under the age 13?

*Mr. Pichai. Most of our products other than a specific product designed for kids, YouTube -- most of our products are not eligible for children under the age of 13.

*Ms. Castor. Yes. So you are not going to provide that.

Mr. Zuckerberg, how much advertising revenue does Facebook -- do you make from behavioral surveillance advertising targeted towards kids under age 13?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, it should be none of it. We don't allow children under the age of 13 --

*Ms. Castor. Are you --

*Mr. Zuckerberg. -- on the services that run advertising.

*Ms. Castor. Oh, are you saying that there are no kids on Instagram under the age of 13 right now?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, children under the age of 13 are not allowed on Instagram. When we find out that they are there --

*Ms. Castor. No. That is not the answer. I think of course, every parent knows that there are kids under the age of 13 on Instagram. And the problem is that you know it, and you know that the brain and social development of our kids if still evolving at a young age. There are reasons in the law that we set that cutoff at 13. But now, because these platforms have ignored it, they have profited off of it, we are going to strengthen the law. And I encourage all of my colleagues to join in this effort. I have heard a lot of bipartisan support here today.

We also need to hold the corporate executives accountable and give parents the tools that they need to take care and protect their kids.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady's time is expired.

The chair recognizes Mr. Johnson for five minutes.

*Mr. Johnson. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Over a decade ago, Americans watched Facebook, Twitter, and Google emerge from humble beginnings. We were curious to see how these new, innovative companies would improve our lives. The results are in, and they are deeply concerning.

We have seen a surge in cyberbullying, child portion, radical extremism, human trafficking, suicides, and screen addiction, all of which have been linked to the use of social media. Our Nation's political discourse has never been

uglier, and we haven't been this divided since the Civil War.

Yet Big Tech marches on uninhibited. What is their newest target? Children under the age of 13. News outlets this week have reported that Facebook is planning to create an Instagram app designed for children under the age of 13. We have talked about it here already today. Elementary and middle school students.

By allowing Big Tech to operate under Section 230 as is, we will be allowing these companies to get our children hooked on their destructive products for their own profit. Big Tech is essentially handing children a lit cigarette and hoping they stay addicted for life.

In 1994, Democratic Congressman Henry Waxman chaired a hearing with the CEOs of our Nation's largest tobacco companies. During his opening statement, he stated, and I quote, "Sadly, this deadly habit begins with our kids. In many cases they become hooked quickly and develop a lifelong addiction that is nearly impossible to break.''

So Mr. Zuckerberg and Mr. Dorsey, you profit from your company's hooking users to your platforms by capitalizing on their time. So yes or no: Do you agree that you make money off of creating an addiction to your platforms?

Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, no. I don't agree with that.

*Mr. Johnson. Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. What we do is --

*Mr. Johnson. That is what I needed, a yes or a no, because you do.

Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. No.

*Mr. Johnson. Okay. All right. Let me go on.

Chairman Waxman went on to say, and I quote, "For decades, the tobacco companies have been exempt from the standards of responsibility and accountability that apply to all other American corporations. Companies that sell aspirin, cars, and soda are all held to strict standards when they cause harm, and that we demand that when problems occur, corporations and their senior executives be accountable to Congress and the public. This hearing marks the beginning of a new relationship between Congress and the tobacco companies.'' That is what Chairman Waxman said in 1994.

So For all three of you, Mr. Zuckerberg, Mr. Dorsey, and Mr. Pichai: Do you agree that the CEOs that -- as the CEOs of major tech companies, you should be held accountable to Congress and the public? Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I think we are accountable to Congress and to the public.

*Mr. Johnson. Do you think you should be held accountable?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. I am not sure I understand what you mean, but I think so.

*Mr. Johnson. It is an easy question. Should you be held accountable --

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Yes.

*Mr. Johnson. -- to Congress and the public for the way you run your business?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Yes. And we are.

*Mr. Johnson. Okay. All right. Thank you.

Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes. Accountable to the public.

*Mr. Johnson. Okay. Accountable -- no. I said accountable to Congress and the public. We represent the public. So you agree?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes.

*Mr. Johnson. Okay. Thank you. Mr. Pichai?

*Mr. Pichai. Yes. I am here today because I am accountable to Congress and members of the public.

*Mr. Johnson. Okay. Great. Well, gentlemen, let me tell you this, and I think I have heard it mentioned by several of my other colleagues. There is a lot of smugness among you. There is this air of untouchableness in your responses to many of the tough questions that you are being asked.

So let me tell you all this. All of these concerns that

Chairman Waxman stated in 1994 about Big Tobacco apply to my concerns about Big Tech today, about your companies. It is now public knowledge that former Facebook executives have admitted that they use the tobacco industry's playbook for addictive products. And while this is not your first hearing in front of Congress, I can assure you that this hearing marks a new relationship between all of us here today. There will be accountability.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. I thank the gentleman. He yields back.

The chair now recognizes Mr. McNerney for five minutes.

*Mr. McNerney. I want to thank the chair for organizing this hearing, and I thank the participants. This is a lot of work on your behalf and a long day for you. I appreciate that.

Are you all aware that your platforms are behemoths, and that the Americans are demanding that we step in and rein in your platforms both in terms of how you handle our data and hour platforms handle disinformation that causes real harm to Americans and to the democracy itself?

I understand the tension you have between maximizing your profits by engaging to your platforms on the one hand and by the need to address disinformation and real harm it causes on the other hand. Your unwillingness to unambiguously commit to enforcing your own policies and

removing the 12 most egregious spreaders of vaccine disinformation from your platforms gets right at what I am concerned about.

Disinformation is a strong driver for engagement, and consequently you too often don't act, even though we know you have the resources to do that. There are real harms associated with this. And my questions -- I hope I don't appear to be rude -- but when I ask for a yes or no question, I will insist on a yes or no answer.

Mr. Zuckerberg, yes or no: Do you acknowledge that there is disinformation being spread on your platform?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sorry, I was muted. Yes, there is, and we take steps to fight it.

*Mr. McNerney. Thank you. Yes or no: Do you agree that your company has profited from the spread of disinformation?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I don't agree with that. People don't want to see disinformation on our services, and when we do --

*Mr. McNerney. So it is no, then.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. -- I think it hurts our long-term --

*Mr. McNerney. You said you don't agree with that. I appreciate your forthrightness on that. But we all know this is happening. Profits are being generated from COVID-19 and vaccine disinformation, election disinformation, QAnon

conspiracy theories, just to name a few things. And it is baffling that you have a negative answer to that question. Approximately -- well, let's move on to the next issue.

Mr. Zuckerberg, you talked a lot about relying on third party fact checkers to combat the spread of disinformation but you tell us very little about the process. I wrote you a letter nearly two years ago asking about it and you failed to answer my question.

I ask this question again when an executive from your company testified last year and she failed to answer. I would like to get an answer today. On average, from the time content is posted to Facebook's platform, how long does it take Facebook to flag suspicious content to third party fact-checkers to review the content and for Facebook to take remedial action after this review is completed? How long does this entire process take? I am just looking for a quick number.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, it can vary. If an AI system identifies something immediately, it can be within seconds. If we have to wait for people to report it to us and have human review, it can take hours or days. The fact-checkers take as much time as they need to review things, but as soon as we get an answer back from them, we should operationalize that and attach a label if the content is rated false and --

*Mr. McNerney. I am paying attention on what you are saying. But what I do know is that this process isn't happening quickly enough, and I am very concerned that you aren't motivated to speed things up because the most problematic content is what gets the most views, and the longer the content stays up, the more help -- the more this helps maximize your bottom line and the more harm that it can cause. It is clear that you are not going to make these changes on your own.

This is a question for all of the participants, panelists: Would you oppose legislation that prohibits placing ads next to what you know to be or should know to be false or misleading information, including ads that are placed in videos, promoted content, and ads that are placed above, below, or on the site of a piece of content?

Mr. Zuckerberg, would you answer with a yes or no first, please?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, that is very nuanced. I think the questions to determine whether something is misinformation is a process that I think would need to be spelled out well in a law like that.

*Mr. McNerney. Well, okay. I appreciate that.

Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes. I would oppose it until we see the actual requirements and what the ramifications are. We need

to understand that.

*Mr. McNerney. Okay. And Mr. Pichai, would you oppose a prohibition like this?

*Mr. Pichai. The principle makes sense. In fact, advertisers don't want anywhere or near to be content like that. And so we already have incentives. You can imagine reputable advertisers, like consumer products advertisers, do not want any ads to appear next to information that could turn off their consumers. So we have natural incentives to do the right thing here.

*Mr. McNerney. You all say you want to save an open platform for everyone. You say it is not in your company's interest to have this information on your platform. So you shouldn't oppose efforts that would prevent harming the American people.

I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired. The gentleman yields back.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Long for five minutes.

*Mr. Long. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Pichai, I am going to ask you a yes or no question, and just tell me if you know the difference in these two words: yes and no?

*Mr. Pichai. Yes.

*Mr. Long. Mr. Zuckerberg, same question for you. Do

you know the difference in yes and no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Yes, Congressman.

*Mr. Long. And Mr. Dorsey, same question for you. Do you know the difference in two words, yes or no?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes.

*Mr. Long. I am sorry?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes.

*Mr. Long. Is that a yes? I didn't --

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes. I know the difference.

*Mr. Long. Thank you. I want a steak dinner there from one of my colleagues. They didn't think I could get all three of you to answer a yes or no question. I did it.

Mr. Zuckerberg, let me ask you: How do you ascertain if a user is under 13 years old?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, on services like Facebook, we have people put in a birthday when they register.

*Mr. Long. That is handy. So a 13-year-old would never -- I mean, an 11-year-old would never put in the wrong birthday by two years and say they were 13? Is that kind of your policy?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, it is more nuanced than that. But I think you are getting at a real point, which is that people lie. And we have additional systems that try to determine what someone's age might be, so if we detect that

someone might be under the age of 13, even if they lied, we kick them off.

But this is part of the reason why we are exploring having a service for Instagram that allows under-13s on, because we worry that kids may find ways to try to lie and evade some of our systems. But if we create a safe system that has appropriate parent controls, then we might be able to get people into using that instead. We are still early in figuring this out, but that is a big part of the theory and what we are hoping to do here.

*Mr. Long. But currently they are now allowed to use Instagram. Correct?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. That is correct. Our policies do not allow people under the age of 13 to use it.

*Mr. Long. I am from Missouri, the Show-Me State. And just to say that no one under 13 can get on to me doesn't pass the Missouri smell test of "show me.'' So I was thinking with you, Mr. Zuckerberg, you created the Facebook Oversight Board as a way to help hold Facebook accountable. They are currently looking at Facebook's decision to remove President Trump's Facebook account.

If the oversight board determines that Facebook should have left President Trump's account up, what will you do?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, we will respect the decision of the oversight board, and if they tell us that

former President Trump's account should be reinstated, then we will honor that.

*Mr. Long. I don't know why people call Attorney General Ashcroft "Attorney General,'' but when they speak of President Trump, they call him "former President.'' But I guess I will leave that for another day.

Sticking with you again, Mr. Zuckerberg, my understanding is that the Facebook Oversight Board is comprised of members from all over the world. As you are well aware, the United States has the strictest protections on free speech than any other country.

Since the decisions of the board are being made by a panel rather than the U.S. court of law, how can you assure members of this committee and the American people that the oversight board will uphold free speech and make their decisions based on American laws and principles?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, the members of the oversight board were selected because of their views on free expression and strong support of it. That is why we created the oversight board, to help us defend these principles and to help us balance the different aspects of human rights, including free expression.

But each of the people on the oversight board was selected because of a strong commitment to free expression, and I think the decisions that the oversight board has made

so far reflect that.

*Mr. Long. Okay. Let me move on to Mr. Dorsey.

Mr. Dorsey, I know you are from the "Show-Me'' State also. Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?

*Mr. Dorsey. Not yet.

*Mr. Long. Mr. Pichai, have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?

*Mr. Pichai. Sorry. I missed the question, Congressman?

*Mr. Long. I know. I bore a lot of people. Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, I was very fortunate to have received it last week.

*Mr. Long. So you have one shot; you have another one to go? Or is it just Johnson & Johnson, where you just need one?

*Mr. Pichai. I still have one more shot to go.

*Mr. Long. And Mr. Zuckerberg, same question: Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. I have not yet, but hope to as soon as possible.

*Mr. Long. Okay. It is not a personal preference not to get vaccinated, they just haven't got to your age group?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. That is correct.

*Mr. Long. Okay. Thank you. And I just cannot believe

Robert Kennedy, Jr. is out there with his anti-vax stuff and it is allowed to stay up on Twitter.

With that, I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back.

Let's see who is next. I don't see a name. Can staff show us who is next up? Mr. Welch, you are recognized for five minutes.

*Mr. Welch. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

What we are hearing from both sides of the aisle are enormous concerns about some of the consequences of the development of social media -- the algorithmic amplification of disinformation, election interference, privacy issues, the destruction of local news, and also some competition issues. And I have listened carefully, and each of the executives has said that your companies are attempting to face these issues.

But a concern I have is whether, when the public interest is so affected by these decisions and by these developments, ultimately should these decisions be made by private executives who are accountable to shareholders, or should they be made by elected representatives accountable to voters?

So I really have two questions that I would like each of you, starting with Mr. Zuckerberg and then Mr. Pichai and then Mr. Dorsey, to address.

First, do you agree that many of these decisions that

are about matters that so profoundly affect the public interest should they be made exclusively by private actors like yourselves who have responsibilities for these major enterprises?

And secondly, as a way forward to help us resolve these issues or work with them, will you support the creation by Congress of a public agency, one like the Federal Trade Commission or the Securities and Exchange Commission, one that had staff that is expert in policy and technology, that has rulemaking and enforcement authority to be an ongoing representative of the public to address these emerging issues? Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I agree with what you are saying, and I have said a number of times that I think that private companies should not be making so many decisions alone that have to balance these complicated social and public equities.

And I think that the solution that you are talking about could be very effective and positive for helping out because what we have seen in different countries around the world is there are lots of different public equities at stake here -- free expression, safety, privacy, competition -- and these things trade off against each other. And I think a lot of these questions, and the reason why people get upset with the companies, I don't think it is necessarily because the

companies are negligent. I think it is because these are complex tradeoffs between these different equities.

And if you --

*Mr. Welch. Pardon my interruption, but I want to go to Mr. Pichai. But thank you, Mr. Zuckerberg.

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, if your question is -- I just want to make sure. Are you asking about whether there should be another agency? I defer to Congress on that. We are definitely subject to a variety of statutes and oversight by agencies like FTC. We have consent agreements with the FCC. And we engage with these agencies regularly.

*Mr. Welch. Do you believe that it should be up to the public as opposed to private interests to be making decisions about these public effects?

*Mr. Pichai. We definitely think areas where there could be clear legislation informed by the public -- I think that definitely is a better approach. I would say the nature of content is so fast-changing and so dynamic, we spend a lot of energy hiring experts, consult with third parties, and that expertise is needed, I think, based on the --

*Mr. Welch. Right. And that is the problem we have in Congress because an issue pops up and there is no way we can keep up. But you all can barely keep up with it yourself.

Mr. Dorsey, your view on those two questions, please?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes. I don't think the decision should be

made by private companies or the government, which is why we are suggesting a protocol approach to help the people make the decisions themselves, have more control themselves.

*Mr. Welch. So does that mean that the creation of an agency that would be intended to address many of these tech issues that are emerging is something you would oppose or --

*Mr. Dorsey. I always have an open mind. I would want to see the details of what that means and how it works in practice.

*Mr. Welch. Well, of course. But the heart of it is creating an entity that has to address these questions of algorithmic transparency, of algorithmic amplification of hate speech, of disinformation, of competition; and to have an agency that is dedicated to that, much like the Securities and Exchange Commission was designed to stop the rampant abuse on Wall Street in the 1930s -- a public sector entity that is doing this, not just leaving it to private companies.

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes. I do think --

*Mr. Welch. Do you agree or not?

*Mr. Dorsey. I do think there should be more regulation around the primitives of AI. But we focus a lot of our conversations right now on the outcomes of it. I don't think we are looking enough at the primitives.

*Mr. Welch. Thank you. I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back.

The chair recognizes Mr. Bucshon for five minutes.

*Mr. Bucshon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And first of all, I want to thank the witnesses for being here today. It is going to be a long day, and appreciate your testimony and your answering questions.

I do think it is important to understand history -- excuse me -- when you look at these situations and you know, when it comes to the political side, when Thomas Jefferson wanted to get out an anti-Adams message even though he was his own Vice President, had started his own newspaper because it was pretty clear that the newspapers that were being published weren't going to change their view because there was no competitive reason to do that.

And I think we are looking at potentially a similar situation here. Without competition, things don't change. I mean, it would be interesting to know the conversations with John D. Rockefeller in the early 1900s prior to the breakup of Standard Oil in 1911, and then of course AT&T in 1982.

So I understand that these are businesses. They are publicly held companies. I respect that. I understand that. I am a capitalist. That said, these situations are a little different, I think, because there is some social responsibility here. And I appreciate your answers that your companies are doing what you believe are necessary.

So I want to ask -- I am going to take the antitrust

area here. And Mr. Pichai, what do you think -- what is the situation when you have Google, 92 percent of the searches are Google? You basically can't get on the internet without some sort of Google service. What do you think is going to happen? What do you think we should do about that?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, I mean we definitely are engaged with conversations as well as lawsuits in certain cases. We understand there will be scrutiny here. We are a popular general purpose search engine, but we compete vigorously in many of the markets we operate in. For example, the majority of revenue comes from product services, and one in two product services originate with Amazon today in the U.S.

So we definitely see a lot of competition by category. There are many areas as a company we are an emerging player, making phones. Or when we are trying to provide enterprise software, we compete with or larger players as well. And if you look at the last year and look at all the new entrants in the market, new companies that have gone public and emerged strongly, in tech shows, the market is vibrant and dynamic.

As Google, we have invested in many startups. Googlers have started over -- former Google employees have started over 2,000 companies in the past 15 years. And so I see a highly dynamic, vibrant, competitive tech sector, and we are committed to doing our part.

*Mr. Bucshon. Okay. Fair enough.

Mr. Zuckerberg, do you have some comments on that subject?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I would echo Sundar's comments. I think that this is a highly competitive market. I mean, if this is a meeting about social media, not only do you have the different companies that are here today that all offer very big services that compete with each other, but you have new entrants that are growing very quickly, like TikTok, which is reaching a scale of hundreds of millions or billions of people around the world, and I think is growing faster than any of our services of the companies that are up here today, and certainly competitive with us. And that is just naming a few. Right? I mean, obviously there's Snapchat and a bunch of other services as well.

So it is a very competitive marketplace.

*Mr. Bucshon. And do you think -- I will ask you this, Mr. Zuckerberg. I think you have commented that some of the privacy things that maybe the Europeans did would kind of solidify your dominance as a company. So what should we do in the United States on this? Because -- it is a different subject, but similar -- to not do something that would stymie innovation and competition, and further -- in my view, further create a monopolistic or at least a perceived monopolistic environment.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Well, Congressman, I do think that the U.S. should have Federal privacy legislation because I think we need a national standard. And I think having a standard that is across the country that is as harmonized with standards in other places would actually create clearer expectations of industry and make it better for everyone.

But I think the point that you are making is a really important one, which is if we ask companies to lock down data, then that to some degree can be at odds with asking them to open up data to enable, whether it is academic research or competition.

So I think that when we are writing this privacy regulation, we just should be aware of the interaction between our principles on privacy and our principles on competition. And that is why I think a more holistic view, like what Congressman Welch was just proposing, I think is perhaps a good way to go about this.

*Mr. Bucshon. Okay. Quickly, Mr. Dorsey, do you have any comments on that?

*Mr. Dorsey. One of the reasons we are suggesting more of a protocol approach is to enable as many new entrants as possible. We want to be a client on that.

*Mr. Bucshon. Okay. I want to --

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

*Mr. Bucshon. With that, I will yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The chair recognizes Ms. Clarke for five minutes.

*Ms. Clarke. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you, the chairs and the ranking members, for today's hearing. I also thank our witnesses for appearing.

In January, I called for public comment for the discussion draft of my bill, the Civil Rights Modernization Act of 2021, a narrowly focused proposal to protect historically marginalized communities from the harms of targeted advertising practices.

These harms can and have infringed on the civil rights of protected classes, and I am proud to formally introduce this bill next week to diminish inequities in the digital world.

For time's sake, I ask our witnesses to please answer the questions as succinctly as possible.

The first question goes to Mr. Zuckerberg. Facebook currently provides their advertisers with insight on how to get their ads in front of people who are most likely to find their ads relevant by utilizing tools to use criteria like consumer's personal interest, geography, to fine-tune thought targeting.

This has often used code that target or avoid specific races or other protected classes of people. Let me add that I am aware of the updates to your special ad audience.

However, why does Facebook continue to allow for discrimination in the placement of advertisements that can violate civil rights laws?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, we have taken a number of steps to eliminate ways that people can target different groups based on racial affinity and different ways that they might discriminate because this is a very important area. And we have active conversations going on with civil rights experts as to the best ways to continue improving these systems, and we will continue doing that.

*Ms. Clarke. Mr. Dorsey, Twitter allows advertisers to use demographic targeting to reach people based on location, language, device, age, and gender. In July, your company made changes to your ad targeting policies to advise advertisers to "not wrongfully discriminate against legally protected categories of users.''

What did Twitter mean by the phrase "wrongfully discriminate''? Are some kinds of discriminatory advertising permitted on Twitter? If so, would you please explain?

*Mr. Dorsey. No. None at all.

*Ms. Clarke. I am sorry. I didn't get that answer.

*Mr. Dorsey. No. None at all.

*Ms. Clarke. Okay. And so can you explain what you meant by "won't wrongfully discriminate''?

*Mr. Dorsey. We mean that you shouldn't use our ad

systems to discriminate.

*Ms. Clarke. Oh, okay. Mr. Pichai, Google has recently announced a new approach in their targeting system called FLOC, or Federal Learning of Cohorts -- excuse me, Federated Learning of Cohorts, to allow an ad targeting to groups of people with similar characteristics. The new system will utilize machine learning to create these "cohorts'' for the consumers' visits to websites.

Given the potentially biased and disparate impact of machine learning algorithms, how has Google addressed the potential discriminatory impact of this new FLOC system?

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, it is an important area. We recently announced a joint collaboration with HUD to ban ads that would target age, gender, family status, zip code, in addition to race, which we have long disallowed. So we will bring similar prohibitions, particularly when we are using machine learning. And by the FLOC -- it is early; we haven't implemented it yet; we will be published more technical proposals on it.

And they will be held to our AI principles, which prohibit discrimination based on sensitive categories, including race. And we will be happy to consult and explain our work there.

*Ms. Clarke. I appreciate that.

Gentlemen, I just want you to be aware that the longer

we delay in this, the more that these systems that you have created bake discrimination into these algorithms. I think that it is critical that you get in there and that you do what is in the best interest of the public of the United States of America, and undo a lot of the harm that has been created with the bias that has been baked into your systems.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back 23 seconds. And I thank you for this opportunity.

*Mr. Doyle. And I thank the gentlelady for that.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Walberg for five minutes.

*Mr. Walberg. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thanks to the panel for being here. What I have listened to so far today, I would have to say that based upon what many of us in Congress say about the best legislation, when both sides don't like it, it is probably good. And you have certainly hit that today, I think from both sides. You have been attacked for various reasons.

But I have to say the platforms that you have developed are amazing and they have huge potential. And they indeed have enabled us to go directions, the information, the communications, relationships, that can be very positive and are amazing in what has been accomplished.

I think we get down to how that is controlled and who controls it. Going back to our foundations as our country, it was our second President, John Adams, who said that our

constitution was meant for a moral and religious people and is wholly inadequate for any other.

I think we are seeing a lot of the problems that you are frustrated with as a result of parents and families, churches, schools, that aren't taking the primary responsibility. I get that. So it comes down to the choice that is left for the people is really between conscience and the constable.

We are either going to have a conscience that self-controls and, as you have said, Mr. Zuckerberg -- in fact, what you said, I wouldn't mind my 3- and 5-year-old granddaughters coming to your house. I am not asking for the invitation. But I think they would be safe there relative to the online capabilities, from what you have said. But that is conscience versus constable.

But what I have heard today is that there will be some constable, and I am not sure that we will have success in moving forward. So I guess, Mr. Chairman, unfortunately we have been here before. We have been here many times. A few years ago, when Mr. Zuckerberg was here before this committee, I held up a Facebook post by a State senator in Michigan whose post was simply announcing his candidacy as a Republican for elected office, and yet it was censored as shocking and disrespectful or sensational in content.

Just a few months ago I posted my resolution that would

add teachers to the vaccine priority list on Twitter, and it was labeled as "sensitive content'' and encouraged to be changed. Well, hiding behind Section 230, all of you have denied that there is any bias or inequitable handling of content on your platforms.

And yet Pew Research Center found that -- and this is where I have my problem -- not so much with the platform or even the extent of what is on the platform, but they found that 72 percent of the public thinks it is likely that social media platforms actively censor political views that Big Tech companies find objectionable.

Further, and I quote, "By a 4-to-1 margin, respondents were more likely to say Big Tech supports the views of liberals over conservatives than vice versa.'' Probably equaled only by higher education. That was my statement. And yet every time this happens, you fall back on blaming glitches in the algorithms.

It was former -- Greg Coppola, a former Google insider, who said, before he was suspended by Google, he said, "Algorithms don't write themselves. We write them to do what we want them to do.'' That is my concern. Whether it is censoring pro-life groups like Life Action, or pro-Second Amendment groups like the Well-Armed Women, your platforms continually shut down law-abiding citizens in constitutional discussions and commerce that don't align with Big Tech views

and the worldview, and this includes the First and Second Amendments that causes me to be concerned that you don't share the same freedom and constitutional concerns.

It is not often I find myself agreeing with Bernie Sanders, but in an interview earlier this week, and I quote, he said, "If you are asking me do I feel particularly comfortable that the President of the United States should not express his views on Twitter, I don't feel comfortable about that,'' he went on to say, "because yesterday was Donald Trump who is blamed, and tomorrow it could be somebody else.''

Mr. Zuckerberg or Mr. Dorsey, do you believe the law should allow you to be the arbiters of truth, as they have under Section 230? Mr. Zuckerberg first.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I think that it is good to have a law that allows platforms to moderate content. But as I have said today, I think that there -- that we would benefit from more transparency and accountability.

*Mr. Walberg. Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. I don't think we should be the arbiters of truth, and I don't think the government should be, either.

*Mr. Walberg. Gentlemen, I agree.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

*Mr. Walberg. I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The chair now recognizes Mr. Cardenas for

five minutes.

*Mr. Cardenas. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and ranking members, for having this important hearing. I would like to submit to the record a National Hispanic Media Coalition letter against Spanish-language disinformation on social media. If we could submit that for the record, I would appreciate that.

[The National Hispanic Media Coalition letter follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********

*Mr. Cardenas. Also, my first question is thank you, Mr. Zuckerberg. In 2020, Facebook brought in approximately [redacted] revenue in 2020. Is that about right, give or take?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I think that is about right.

*Mr. Cardenas. Okay. Thank you. Good. How much of that revenue did Facebook invest in identifying misinformation, disinformation, and that portion of your business?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I don't know the exact answer. But we invest billions of dollars in our integrity programs, including having more than a thousand engineers working on this and 35,000 people doing content review across the company.

*Mr. Cardenas. Okay. And how many people do have full-time equivalents, in your company overall?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I don't know the exact number, but I think it is around 60,000.

*Mr. Cardenas. Okay. So you are saying over half of the people in your company are doing the portion of content review, et cetera, which is the main subject we seem to be talking about today?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. No, Congressman, because you asked about full-time employees, and some of the content reviewers

are contractors.

*Mr. Cardenas. Oh, okay. All right. Well, there seems to be a disparity between the different languages that are used on your platform in America. For example, there was a study published in April, and over 100 items of misinformation on Facebook in six different languages was found, and 70 percent of the Spanish-language content analyzed had not been labeled by Facebook as compared to 30 percent of the English-language misinformation that had not been labeled. So there seems to be a disparity there.

What kind of investment is Facebook making on the different languages to make sure that we have more of an accuracy of flagging those disinformation and misinformation?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, thanks. We have an international fact-checking program where we work with fact-checkers in more than 80 countries and a bunch of different languages.

In the U.S. specifically, we have Spanish-speaking fact-checkers as well as English-speaking fact-checkers. So that's on the misinformation side. But also, when we create resources with authoritative information, whether it is around COVID information or election information, we translate those hubs so that way they can be available in both English and Spanish. And we make it so people can see the content in whatever language they prefer.

*Mr. Cardenas. Thank you. So basically you are saying it is extensive?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, this is certainly something that we invest a lot in. And it will be something that we continue to invest more in.

*Mr. Cardenas. Okay. I like the last portion. I do believe, and would love to see you invest more.

My 70-plus-year-old mother-in-law, who is primarily a Spanish speaker, commented to me the other day that her friends who communicate mainly in Spanish -- and they do use the internet; they use some of your platforms, gentlemen -- that they were worried about the vaccine and that somebody is going to put a chip in their arm.

For God's sakes, I mean, that to me just was unbelievable that they would comment on that. But they got most of that information on the internet, on various platforms. Clearly, Spanish language disinformation is an issue, and I would like to make sure that we see all of your platforms address these issues, not only in English but in all languages.

I think it is important for us to understand that a lot of hate is being spewed on the internet, and a lot of it is coming through many of your platforms. For example, there are 23 people dead in El Paso because somebody filled this person's head with a lot of hateful nonsense, and he drove to

specifically kill Mexicans along the Texas-Mexican border.

Eight people are dead in Atlanta because anti-Asian hatred and misinformation has been permitted to spread and allowed on these platforms unchecked, pretty much unchecked. The spread of hatred and incitement of violence on platforms is a deadly problem in America, and we need to see that it stops.

Mr. Zuckerberg, do you believe that you have done enough to combat these kinds of issues?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I believe that our systems -- and that we have done more than basically any other company. But I think that there is still a problem and there is still more that needs to be done.

*Mr. Cardenas. Okay. That is good. You would like to do more. Thank you.

I only have 15 seconds so I am going to ask this question to all three of you: Do you think that each one of your organizations should have an executive-level individual in charge of this department reporting directly to the CEO? Do you think you agree that that should be the case? Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, we have an executive-level person who is in charge of the integrity team that I talked about. He is on my management team.

*Mr. Cardenas. Reports directly to you?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, he does not. I only have a few direct reports. A lot of people on the management team report to them.

*Mr. Cardenas. Okay. Thank you. To the other two witnesses, very quickly?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, we have senior executives, including someone who reports directly to me, who oversees trust and safety across all of these areas.

*Mr. Cardenas. Thank you. Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. We do. We do.

*Mr. Cardenas. Thank you so much. I yield back the balance of my time.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Carter for five minutes.

*Mr. Carter. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank all of you for being here.

Mr. Zuckerberg, I would like to start with you. And I wanted to ask you, you are aware, as all of us are, of the disaster that we have at the Southern border [audio disruption] indicate that human smugglers have been using social media, including Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, to coordinate their operations in transporting illegal immigrants into the United States -- things like, what to say to authorities, transportation tips, and other forms of information that are being traded on your platform to evade

authorities and contribute to the crisis, this disaster at the border.

Mr. Zuckerberg, do you feel complicit in any way that your platform is assisting in this disaster?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, first let me say that what is happening at the border is --

*Mr. Carter. I am not -- we know what is happening at the border. I am asking you specifically about your platform. Do you feel complicit in what your platform is doing to assist in this disaster?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, we have policies and we are working to fight this content. We have policies against scams in pages, groups, and events like the content that you are talking about. We are also seeing the State Department use our platform to share factual information with people about --

*Mr. Carter. I am not talking about facts. I am talking about -- I am talking about coyotes who are using your platform to spread this kind of information to assist in this illegal activity that is resulting in horrible conditions for these people who are trying to come across that border.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, that is against our policies, and we are taking a lot of steps to stop it. And again, let me just say that I think the situation at the

border is really serious and we are taking it very seriously.

*Mr. Carter. Well, and I hope you will look into this, these reports that your platform is being used by these traffickers. This is something we need your help with. I hope you feel the sense of responsibility, sir, to help us with this because we certainly need it.

Let me ask you something. You dedicated a lot of your written testimony to election issues. And even today, during this hearing, you have been very public in pushing back about the election claims in November. Yet when Facebook has been essentially silent on the attempted theft of the certified election in Iowa of Representative Miller-Meeks. Why is that? Why are you silent on that, yet you are not silent on other elections?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I think what we saw leading up to January 6 was unprecedented in American history, where you had a sitting President trying to undermine the peaceful transfer of power --

*Mr. Carter. You determined which one is important and which one is not. This seat to these people who elected this duly certified representative, this is the most important thing to them as well.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I think part of what made the January 6th events extraordinary was not just that the election was contested, but that you got folks like the

President --

*Mr. Carter. What -- okay. Let me ask you this: What is it that makes this particular issue irrelevant, that you are not even covering it?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I didn't say that it is irrelevant. But on January 6th, we had insurrectionists storm the Capitol, leading to the death of multiple people.

*Mr. Carter. My time is -- Mr. Zuckerberg, I am aware of that. I was there. I understand what happened. But again, will you commit to treating this as a serious election concern? What is going on --

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, we -- I will commit to that. And we apply our policies to all situations. And I think that this is different from what happened on January 6th, but we apply our policies equally in these cases.

*Mr. Carter. Mr. Dorsey, you, too, have been very silent on this issue on your platform. Will you commit to treating this as a serious concern, the attempted theft of the certified seat in Iowa?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes. We are looking for all opportunities to minimize anything that takes away from integrity of elections.

*Mr. Carter. Okay. Mr. Dorsey, while I have got you, let me ask you: You have started a new program. It is called the Bird Watch, and it allows people to identify

information in tweets that they believe is misleading. And they write notes to provide context in an effort to stop misleading information from spreading.

Have you seen -- we have seen mobs of Twitter users cancel others. And even when the information they share is accurate, why do you think Bird Watch is going to work, given the culture that you created on your platform?

*Mr. Dorsey. Well, it is an experiment. We wanted to experiment with a more crowdsourced approach than us going around and doing all this work.

*Mr. Carter. Don't you think that is kind of a dangerous experiment, when you are taking off truth information?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. No. It is an alternative. And I think --

*Mr. Carter. An alternative.

*Mr. Dorsey. I think we need to experiment as much as possible to get to the right answers. I think it states --

*Mr. Carter. Okay. Well, that is fine as long as you are not the one being experimented on, as long as you are not the one that the information is going --

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair announces that we are going to take a recess now for 15 minutes. So the committee will stand in recess until 3:18, and then we will come back promptly. I call the

committee in recess.

[Recess.]

*Mr. Doyle. Okay. I will call the committee back to order and ask all members and witnesses to come back online.

[Pause]

*Mr. Doyle. We will get started. The chair recognizes Mrs. Dingell for five minutes.

*Mrs. Dingell. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for having this hearing, and to everyone for testifying today.

We can all agree that social media companies have a responsibility to reduce and eliminate the impact of disinformation on their platforms. Mr. Zuckerberg, in the fall of 2020, you made numerous assurances to Congress that you had a handle on militia and conspiracy networks. We know, however, that Facebook private groups And the algorithms that recommend them have assisted in radicalizing users and facilitated terrorism, violence, and extremism against individuals, including the governor of my State of Michigan. Racial and ethnic minorities, including Muslims and, recently, Asian-Americans, are facing growing racist hate online and violence offline. Last year I sent you multiple letters about these issues, so I know you are aware of them.

IN October of 2020, Facebook temporarily decided to stop recommending political or civic groups on its platforms, a

change it has now made permanent. But to be honest, despite what you did in October, we had an insurrection that stormed the Capitol on January 6.

I seriously question Facebook's commitment to actually stopping extremism. In a recent investigative report, a former Facebook AI researcher said he and his team conducted study after study confirming the same basic idea: Models that maximize engagement increase polarization. And you yourself have said that the more likely content is to violate Facebook community standards, the more engagement it generally receives. Engagement is the key to Facebook's growth and success, and the stock markets rewarded you for it. Even as you have been criticized for promoting extremism and racist content, including in a 2020 Facebook civil rights audit. The two seem to go hand in hand. As Facebook was also the most cited social media site in changing documents that the Justice Department filed against the Capitol insurrectionists.

Mr. Zuckerberg, do you still maintain that the more likely user content is to violate Facebook community standards, the more engagement it will receive? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, thanks for raising this because I think that there has been a bunch of inaccurate things about this shared today.

*Mrs. Dingell. Okay.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. There seems to be a belief -- -- --

*Mrs. Dingell. Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sorry. This is a nuanced topic. So if you are okay with it, I would like to --

*Mrs. Dingell. You have to keep it short. But I will give it a second since I want to --

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sure. So --

*Mrs. Dingell. -- that is a victim of this hate.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. People don't want to see misinformation or divisive content on our services. People don't want to see clickbait and things like that. While it may be true that people might be more likely to click on it in the short term, it is not good for our business or our product or our community for this content to be there. It is not what people want, and we run the company for the long term with a view towards 10 or 20 years from now.

And I think that we are highly aligned with our community in trying to not show people the content that is not going to be meaningful to them.

*Mrs. Dingell. Okay, Mr. Zuckerberg. I am going to -- I only have two minutes left. Do you still agree with the statement in Facebook's most recent 10-K filing that the first risk related to your product offerings is our ability to add and retain users and maintain levels of user engagement with our products? Just a yes or no, please.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I think that that is generally right. I mean, for any product, the ability to building something that people like and use is something that is a risk if we can't do that.

*Mrs. Dingell. Okay. So do you still agree with the statement of your CFO on a recent earnings call that the changes to group recommendations so far wouldn't affect your engagement? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, there are so many different parts of the service that I think it is probably right --

*Mrs. Dingell. Can I just --

*Mr. Zuckerberg. -- that not recommending political or civic groups probably isn't going to meaningfully decrease engagement. But we have taken a lot of HR steps, including reducing viral videos by about 50 million hours of watching a day, which have had a meaningful impact on engagement. But we do that because it helps make the service better and helps people like it more, which I think will be better for both the community and our business over the long term.

*Mrs. Dingell. Okay. Mr. Zuckerberg, I am sorry to have to do this in five minutes. But given your promises in the fall, the events that transpired on January 6, and your two incentives that you yourself admit, I find it really difficult to take some of these assurances you are you to

give us today seriously.

I believe that regulators and independent researchers should have access to Facebook and other large social media platforms' recommendation algorithms, not just for groups but for any relevant feature that can be exploited or exploit private user data collected by the company to support extremism. And I support legislation to do so.

Mr. Zuckerberg, given your inability to manage your algorithms, or your unwillingness to reduce controversial content, are you opposed to a law enabling regulators to access social media algorithms or other information technology that result in the promotion of harmful disinformation and extremist content?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Well, Congresswoman -- well, I don't necessarily agree with your characterization. I do think that giving more transparency into the systems is an important thing. We have people working on figuring out how to do this.

One of the nuances here in complexity is that it is hard to separate out the algorithms versus people's data which kind of goes into that to make decisions, and the data is private. So it is tough to make that public and transparent. But I do think that this is an important area of study on how to audit and make algorithms more transparent.

*Mr. Doyle. Okay. The gentlelady's time is expired.

The chair recognizes Mr. Duncan for five minutes.

*Mr. Duncan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me first say that Democrats repeating disinformation about the motives if the murder in Atlanta during a hearing on disinformation is irony at its worst. The murderer admitted that he was a sex addict. The problem was addiction, mental illness. While my thoughts and prayers go out to the families who were impacted by this hideous crime, it was not a hate crime and to say so is disinformation.

Mr. Dorsey, is it okay for a white male to tweet a picture of a KKK Klansman hood to a black woman?

*Mr. Dorsey. No. That would go against our hateful conduct policy.

*Mr. Duncan. Just this week, black conservative commentator Candice Owens was sent a tweet from a white liberal depicting a KKK hood. And your support center said that that racist harassment of a conservative didn't violate your terms of service. What do you have to say about that?

*Mr. Dorsey. We removed that tweet.

*Mr. Duncan. Okay. Thank you for doing that. Also this week, Syrian refugee Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa, a Biden-supporting Muslim, allegedly murdered 10 people at a grocery store in Boulder, Colorado. Your support center told Newsweek that referring to this gentleman as a white Christian terrorist wasn't a violation of your misinformation

policy. What do you have to say about that?

*Mr. Dorsey. I don't know that case, but we can follow up with you on that.

*Mr. Latta. Thank you. Your promises from the last hearing that you will work on this or make it better rang completely hollow sometimes, so I ask that you do.

You have censored and taken down accounts of conservatives, Christian, and even pro-life groups. At the same time, liberals, tyrants, and terrorists continue to have unfettered access on Twitter. You were able to take down the account of a sitting United States President while he was still President. But you continue to allow State sponsors of terror to use Twitter as a platform, including the Ayatollah Khoumeini, Javad Zarif of Iran, or even Bashar al-Assad of Syria.

You act like judge and jury and continue to hide behind the liability protections in Section 230 of Communications Decency Act, which Congress set up to foster a free and open internet. You think you are above the law because, in a sense, Congress gave you that power, but Congress gave you that liability shield to one end: that was the protection of innocent children. Catherine McMorris Rodgers knocked it out of the park today, hammering the point where children are vulnerable.

But let's look at the John Doe vs. Twitter case that is

ongoing right now. According to the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, a teenage boy, a victim of child sex trafficking, had images of his abuse posted on Twitter. One of those videos went viral, and he became the target of bullying to the point of being suicidal. He contacted you to alert you that his sex abuse images were on your platform. You failed to take them down. His mother contacted you to alert you, and again you failed to take them down.

They called the police and they followed up with you with a police report. Your support center told the family that after review, the illegal video was not a violation of your terms of service. In the meantime, the illegal video accrued over 167,000 views.

It took a threat from a Homeland Security agent to Get Twitter to take down the video. Even then you took no action against the accounts that were sharing it and continue to share sexually explicit videos of minors in clear violation of the law and in clear violation of your duties under Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, as they were passed.

So in the eyes of Twitter, it is better to be a pedophile pornographer, a woke racist, or a state sponsor of terror than it is to be a conservative, even a conservative President. You have abused the Section 230 liability shield we gave you to protect children, and used it to silence

conservatives instead.

As we have heard today, your abuses of your privilege are far too numerous to be explained away and far too serious to ignore. So it is time for your liability shield to be removed. Your immunity shield and the immunity shield of other woke companies who choose to score political points with their immunity shields rather than protect children.

My colleagues have been asking you if you deserve to continue to receive immunity under Section 230. Let me answer the question for you. No, you don't. You all think you do, but you don't because you continue to do a disservice to that law and its intent.

The United States constitution has the First Amendment, and that should be your guide. Protecting the speech of users of your platform instead of trading them in like hostages and forcing things through algorithms to lead them down a path.

The American people really are tired of you abusing your rights, abandoning their values. So one of the Christian leaders that you banned, Mr. Dorsey, had as her last post a scripture verse that you took down. And I want to leave it here today, Psalm 34:14. Depart from evil and do good. See peace and pursue it. Rather than silence that wise advice, I strongly suggest that you follow it.

Now, I have heard a lot of stuff on this hearing today

about 230 protections. I challenge my colleagues to really get serious about doing something about this liability shield so that we do have a fair and free internet and people aren't censored.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair recognizes Ms. Kelly for five minutes.

*Ms. Kelly. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the witnesses who are testifying today.

The business model for your platforms is quite simple: Keep users engaged. The more time people spend on social media, the more data harvested and targeted ads sold. To building that engagement, social media platforms amplify content that gets attention. That can be cat videos or vacation pictures, but too often it means content that is incendiary, contains conspiracy theories or violence.

Algorithms in your platforms can actively funnel users from the mainstream to the fringe, subjecting users to more extreme content, all to maintain user engagement. This is a fundamental flaw in your business model that mere warning labels, temporary suspension of some accounts, and even content moderation cannot address. And your company's insatiable desire to maintain user engagement will continue to give such content a safe haven if doing so improves your bottom line.

I would like to ask my first question of all the witnesses. Do each of you acknowledge that your company has profited off harmful misinformation, conspiracy theories, and violent content on your platform? Just say yes or no. Starting with Mr. Dorsey, yes or no?

*Mr. Dorsey. No. That is not our business.

*Ms. Kelly. Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. No, Congresswoman. I don't think we profit from it. I think it hurts our service.

*Ms. Kelly. Mr. Pichai?

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, it is certainly not our intent, and we definitely do not want such content. And we have clear policies against it.

*Ms. Kelly. Well, since you all said no, can you please provide to me in writing how you manage to avoid collecting revenue from ads either targeted by or served on such content? So I will be expecting that.

There is a difference between a conversation in a living room and one being pumped out to millions of followers, from discouraging voting and COVID-19 misinformation to encouraging hate crimes. The harms are real and disproportionate.

Do you acknowledge that such content is having especially harmful effects on minorities and communities of color? Yes or no again? I don't have a lot of time, so yes

or no? Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes.

*Ms. Kelly. Mr. Pichai?

*Mr. Pichai. Yes.

*Ms. Kelly. Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Yes. I think that's right.

*Ms. Kelly. Thank you. If your financial incentive is that human psychology leads to the creation of a system that promotes emotionally charged content that is often harmful, do you believe that you can address the -- do you believe that you will always need to play whack-a-mole on different topics? Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I do think that we can take systematic actions that help to reduce a large amount of this. But there will always be some content that gets through those systems that we will have to react to.

*Ms. Kelly. Mr. Dorsey?

*Ms. Kelly. That is not our incentive, but I agree with Mark. Our model is to constantly integrate. We are going to miss some things, and we will go too far in some cases.

*Ms. Kelly. Mr. Pichai?

*Mr. Pichai. I agree largely with what Mark and Jack said. And we -- a lot of channels, we remove thousands of misleading election videos. There are many involving threats, and we are very vigilant.

*Ms. Kelly. Okay. More transparency and research into the AI models you use is needed. I understand that they are constantly evolving and proprietary. However, those obstacles must not be insurmountable. Would you agree to some type of test bed to evaluate your procedures and technology for disparate impacts? And would you welcome minimal standards set by the government? I only have 44 seconds.

*Mr. Dorsey. I will go. You are not calling us. But we -- yes. We are interested in opening all this up and going a step further in having a protocol. I don't think that should be government-driven, but it should be open and transparent that the government can look at it and understand how it works.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. I agree that this is an area where research would be helpful. And I think some standards, especially amongst the civil rights community, would be helpful guidance for the companies.

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, we work with many third parties. I just mentioned the Heart collaboration we had. Definitely would be open to conversations about minimum standards. It is an important area.

*Ms. Kelly. Thank you. I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady's time is expired. The chair now recognizes Mr. Dunn for five minutes.

*Mr. Dunn. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Many of the questions today deal with personal arms. But there are long-term economic and security arms to our country I would like us to keep in mind as well.

I represent Florida's 2nd congressional district, which is proud to host a large presence of the U.S. military, including civilian support companies. One of these is Applied Research Associates, which is doing great work with our military in the field of artificial intelligence and machine learning.

I agree with our Nation's top national security experts on the critical importance of the United States maintaining its competitive edge in AI. And I share the concern of former Google CEO Eric Schmidt, who warned just a few weeks ago of the grave consequences should we lose that edge to China.

Leader Rodgers led a bipartisan bill enacted last year, the American Compete Act, to lay out clear AI strategy. We all recognize that China is not a good place to do business, evidenced by the fact that all of your respective main products and services are banned there. It is clear that the influence of the Chinese Communist Party permeates the entire corporate structure in China. Xi Jinping himself stated his goal of integrating the party's leadership into all aspects of corporate governance.

Let's be clear with each other. It is impossible to do business in China without either directly or indirectly aiding the Chinese Communist Party. It is also important to state for the record that each of your business models involve collecting data from individuals who use your product and then using that data for some other purpose.

Mr. Pichai, I am deeply concerned with Google's pursuit of and investment in artificial intelligence research in China, widely reported over the last few years. First and foremost, can you assure Americans that their personal data, regardless of how you think you have de-identified it, data you collect when they use Google and which is central to your algorithms, is not used in your artificial intelligence collaboration with the Chinese Government?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, I want to correct any misperceptions here. We do not have an AI research center in China now. We had a limited presence working on open source projects, primarily on open source projects and around K through 12 education with a handful of employees. We don't have that any more. Compared to our peers, we don't offer our core services in China, products like search, YouTube, Gmail, et cetera.

*Mr. Dunn. I am going to have to reclaim my time because it is limited. But I want your team to follow up with me because I am honestly somewhat skeptical. I think

you had three centers there in China. And I want to know more about what they are doing, and also what material they are using.

And I want to be clear. I am not just suggesting that simply doing business in a country means that you endorse all their policies. As a former businessman myself, I know the politics all too often get in the way of what we are trying to do. However, Google's own list of artificial intelligence principles states that it will not collaborate on technologies to gather or use information for surveillance, violating international accepted norms or contravenes widely accepted principles of international law and human rights.

We know that the Chinese Communist Party is using artificial intelligence technology to spread misinformation and suppress the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong as well as using that technology in its genocidal crimes against the Uyghurs, including murdering them for their organ harvesting.

Once again, can you be sure that none of the work you are doing in collaboration with the Chinese government is not aiding them in this ability?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, happy to follow up a clarify the limited work on AI we undertake. It is primarily around open source projects. And very happy to engage and very specifically follow up on what we do.

*Mr. Dunn. Well, I think that is great. And I know I

am running out of time here, but I ask that we continue this dialogue. And I think Google would be very well served by promoting greater transparency in all of its actions regarding artificial intelligence in China. Your customers have a right to know about this.

In 2018, Diane Greene, former CEO of Google Cloud, noted, "We believe the uses of our cloud and artificial intelligence will prove to be overwhelmingly positive for the world. But we also recognize we cannot control all downstream uses of our technology.''

Well, a good place to start would be to end this dangerous artificial intelligence research relationship with China. So with that, Mr. Pichai, thank you. Thank you, all the members of the witness panel.

And Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back.

The chair recognizes Mr. McEachin for five minutes.

*Mr. McEachin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And to you and Chairman Pallone and Chairwoman Schakowsky, thank you for convening today's hearing and for our witnesses for joining us.

In July of last year, I led more than 30 of my colleagues, including several on this committee, in a letter to your companies asking what you were doing to halt the spread of climate change disinformation on your platforms.

As my colleagues and I clearly expressed in our letter, climate change is a real and urgent threat, and the spread of disinformation on your platforms is undermining that fact.

For instance, the World Health Organization estimates that climate change causes 150,000 deaths annually, a number that will only increase in the coming years. All this begs a simple question: Why do you recall platforms not treat climate change disinformation with a sense of immediacy and alarm?

Mr. Zuckerberg, Facebook recently implemented the Climate Change Information Center, which directs users to a landing page with climate change facts from researchers and organizations. are you able to share data on how widespread a problem climate change disinformation is on your platform and how much the Climate Change Information Center has reduced it?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sure. Thanks, Congressman. Our approach to fighting misinformation -- of which climate misinformation, I think, is a big issue, so I agree with your point here. We take a multi-pronged approach. One is to try to show people authoritative information, which is what the Climate Information Center does.

But then we also try to reduce the spread of misinformation around the rest of the service through this independent third-party fact-checking program that we have in

which one of the fact-checkers is specifically focused on science feedback and climate feedback type of issues.

Overall, I would be happy to follow up and share more details on what we have seen across those. But this is certainly an area that I agree is extremely important and needs multiple tactics to address.

*Mr. McEachin. Well, thank you. And it is my understanding that this climate center was modeled after your COVID-19 Information Center. However, different standards still apply for both organic content and paid-for advertising for climate change versus COVID-19.

Why does Facebook not apply the same standards of fact-checking on climate change that it does on COVID-19 content?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, you are right that the Climate Information Center was based off our work on the COVID Information Center and Election Information Center. In terms of how we treat misinformation overall, we divide the misinformation into things that could cause imminent physical harm, of which COVID misinformation that might lead someone to get sick or hurt or vaccine misinformation, falls in the category of imminent physical harm, and we take down that content.

Then other misinformation are things that are false but may not lead to imminent physical harm we label and reduce their distribution but leave them up. So that is the broad

approach that we have, and that sort of explains some of the differences between some of the different issues and how we approach them.

*Mr. McEachin. Mr. Pichai -- and I hope I am pronouncing that correctly, sir -- YouTube has employed contextualization tools linking viewers to similar sources a Facebook's Climate Center. That being said, you restricted but have not removed some repeat offenders from your platform such as Prager University, a nonaccredited university producing climate change denial content.

Are you not concerned that by restricting those videos and not removing repeat offenders, that people who are determined to find those videos to validate their fears will indeed find them and share them with others?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, it is an incredibly area. In general, in these areas we rely on raising authoritative information, both by showing information panels as well as a raising scientific content, academic content, and journalistic content so our algorithms rank those types of content higher for an area like climate change, similar to election integrity and COVID.

And obviously it is an area where there is a range of opinions people can express. We have clear policies and if it is violative, we remote. If it is not violative but if it is not deemed to be of high quality, we don't recommend the

content. And that is how we approach it and we are committed to this area as a company.

We lead in sustainability. We have committed to operating 24/7 on a carbon-free basis by 2030. And it is an area where we are investing significantly.

*Mr. McEachin. Well, thank you. I have run out of time. Mr. Dorsey, I apologize to you. Perhaps we will have an opportunity to have a conversation.

Mr. Chairman, I give you my two seconds.

*Mr. Doyle. I thank the gentleman. The gentleman yields back.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Curtis for five minutes.

*Mr. Curtis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to our witnesses.

My first comment is to point out that in her 2019 presidential campaign, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat, called for the breaking up of your companies. Several weeks ago, in a speech at CPAC, Senator Josh Hawley, Republican, also said that Big Tech companies should be broken up. I don't think I need to point out the irony of Josh Hawley validating Elizabeth Warren at CPAC.

There seems to be a train wreck coming. Unfortunately, the very few tools that we have in our tool bag are regulation and breaking up. Mr. Zuckerberg, I read through your Terms of Service, including the dense Community

Standards document. In your Terms of Service, you state that you cannot control and do not take responsibility for content posted on your platform.

The Community Standards document, which is frequently cited as why content is or is not censored, says you sometimes make content moderation decisions based off what is considered best for the public interest or public discourse.

I know in your testimony you said that companies need to earn their liability protections. That is great. But that doesn't address the concerns people understandably share about your past or current view on what is or is not acceptable.

How do you claim you cannot take responsibility and therefore should maintain your liability protections for content posted on your site, but at the same time state that your platform or monitored content based off what is in the public's best interest? That appears to be two-sided.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, thanks. People use our services to share and send messages billions of times a day. And it would be impossible for us to scan or understand everything that was going on, and I don't think that our society would want us to take the steps that would be necessary to monitor every single thing. I think that we would think that that would infringe on our freedoms.

So broadly, I think it is impossible to ask companies to

take responsibility for every single piece of content that someone posts, and that, I think, is the wisdom of 230. At the same time, I do think that we should expect large platforms to have effective systems for being able to handle, broadly, speaking, categories of content that are clearly illegal.

So we have talked today about child exploitation and opioids and sex trafficking and things like that. And I think it is reason to expect that companies have systems that are broadly effective, even if they are not going to be exactly perfect, and there are still going to be some pieces of content that inevitably get through, just like no police department in the city is able to eliminate all crime.

*Mr. Curtis. I am going to jump in only because we are out of time. I would love to spend more time on that with you.

Let me also ask you, Utah is known for Silicon Slopes, our startup community. You have called for government regulation, but some view this with skepticism because larger companies tend to deal with regulation much better than small companies.

If you think back to your college days, the early startup phase of Facebook, what challenges do you see for startups to compete, and what cautions should Congress consider as we look at regulations that potentially could be

a barrier for companies that must might be your future competition?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Thanks. I think that this is a really important point whenever we are talking about regulation. And I want to be clear that the recommendations that I am making for Section 230 I would only have applied to larger platforms.

I think it is really critical that a small platform, the next student in a dorm room or in a garage, needs to have a relatively low -- as low as possible regulatory burden in order to be able to innovate and then get to the scale where they can afford to put those kind of systems in place. So I think that that is a really important point to make.

But I think that that goes for the content discussions that we are having around 230. It probably also applies to the privacy law that I hope that Congress will pass this year or next year to create a Federal U.S. privacy standard. And I also think that we should be exploring proactively, requiring things like data portability that would make it easier for people to take data from one service to another.

*Mr. Curtis. I want to thank you. I have got just a few seconds left. And Mr. Pichai, this is a little bit off topic so I am simply going to ask this question and submit it for the record and not ask for a response.

Almost a decade ago your company started Google Fiber.

You introduced Kid Speed and free internet to all the residents of my home city, Provo, Utah. Sadly, it seems like your efforts to do this across the country were slowed down or even stopped by excessive government regulations. I would love you to share, off the record and I will submit it for the record, why government is making it so hard to expand internet across the country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield my time.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back.

The chair recognizes Mr. Soto for five minutes.

*Mr. Soto. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When television, radio, traditional newspapers, political blogs, and even private citizens spread lies, they can be sued and held liable for damages or FCC fines. But pursuant to 230, you all can't be sued. You have immunity. But it ain't 1996 anymore, is it? Meanwhile, lies are spreading like wildfire through platforms. Americans are getting hurt or killed. And the reason is your algorithms.

I want you to all know I was held captive in the gallery during the Capitol insurrection. I was surrounded by domestic terrorists that killed the Capitol police officer, ransacked the Capitol, and almost disrupted a presidential election. And many of these domestic terrorists plotted on your platforms. I think we all understand by now this violence is real. And so this is why we are here today, in

the committee of jurisdiction, with power to protect our fellow Americans.

Mr. Zuckerberg had mentioned effective moderation systems. So now we know you have systems that can prevent many of these harms. Thank you for your statements supporting accountability today, an even for championing support of accountability now.

So the question is: What specific changes to Section 230 do you support to ensure more accountability? Mr. Zuckerberg just mentioned categories of content that are clearly illegal, U.S. privacy standards, and data portability as three standards we should be looking at.

Mr. Pichai, should we be creating these standards and then holding platforms accountable if they violate them under 230?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, first of all, there are many ways and there are many laws today which do hold us liable. FTC has oversight, we have a consent decree with the FCC, COPPA, HIPAA, et cetera, and for example, areas where there are privacy laws, and we have called for Federal privacy legislation, but in Europe, the GDPR. In California, we have privacy State legislation. We are both accountable as well as we are subject to private plaintiff action against these statutes.

*Mr. Soto. So Mr. Pichai, you agree with these

4034 categories that were just outlined by Mr. Zuckerberg. Is
4035 that correct?
4036 *Mr. Pichai. I definitely think what Mark is talking
4037 about around lines of transparency and accountability are
4038 good proposals to think through. There are various
4039 legislative proposals; among those --
4040 *Mr. Soto. Excuse me. My time is -- Mr. Dorsey, do you
4041 think we should be establishing categories of content that
4042 are clearly illegal, U.S. privacy standards, and data
4043 portability, as well as penalties for violation of those
4044 standards?
4045 *Mr. Dorsey. I believe, as we look upon 230 and
4046 evolutions of it in putting upon it, I think we need more
4047 transparency around content moderation practices, not just
4048 policies. I think we need more robust appeals processes.
4049 And I think the real issue is algorithms and giving people
4050 more choice around algorithms, more transparency around
4051 algorithms. So if there is any one I would pick, it would be
4052 that one. It is a tough one, but it is the most impactful.
4053 *Mr. Soto. Thank you, Mr. Dorsey.
4054 Mr. Zuckerberg, political misinformation spread
4055 rampantly, unfortunately, in Spanish in Florida's Hispanic
4056 community on Facebook in the 2020 presidential election even
4057 with the political ad ban. How do you think this happens?
4058 Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, it is -- I do still think that there is too much misinformation across all of these media that we have talked about today. How did it happen? I mean, it is -- I think we have talked to a lot today about algorithms. I actually think a lot of this stuff happens in what we refer to as deterministic products like messaging. Right? Someone sends a text message to someone else. There is no algorithm there determining whether that gets delivered. People can just send that to someone else.

A lot of this stuff, I think, unfortunately was amplified on TV and in traditional news as well. There was certainly some of this content on Facebook, and it is our responsibility to make sure that we are building effective systems that can reduce the spread of that. I think a lot of those systems performed well during this election cycle. But it is an iterative process, and there are always going to be new things that we will need to do to keep up with the different threats that we face.

*Mr. Soto. Mr. Zuckerberg, will you commit to boosting Spanish language moderators and systems on Facebook, especially during election season, to help prevent this from happening again in Spanish language?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, this is already something that we focus on. We already beefed up and added more capacity to Spanish language fact-checking and Spanish

language authoritative information resources. And that is certainly something that we hope to build on in the future. So the answer to your question is yes.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Mrs. Lesko for five minutes.

*Mrs. Lesko. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witnesses.

I represent constituents in the great State of Arizona, and most of my constituents just want to be treated fairly, equitably, impartially, and they want to make sure that their private information stays private.

Mr. Pichai, does Wikipedia influence Google's search results?

*Mr. Pichai. We do index, and Wikipedia is in our index. And for certain queries, if an answer from Wikipedia rises to the top of our ranking, yes, we do rely on it.

*Mrs. Lesko. Thank you.

Mr. Dorsey, did you personally decide to ban President Trump from your platform?

*Mr. Dorsey. We have a process that we go through to get there, and that came after a warning.

*Mrs. Lesko. And did you make the final decision?

*Mr. Dorsey. Ultimately, I have final responsibility.

*Mrs. Lesko. Thank you.

[redacted]

[redacted]

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, we take privacy very seriously. We don't use the data from Gmail for advertising, and our employees generally do not access it, only in narrow cases, either to troubleshoot with the right consent and permissions. There are prohibitions with enough checks and balances.

*Mrs. Lesko. So I think what you are saying is occasionally your Google employees to review and analyze.

I have another question regarding that. Does Google share Gmail users' emails or analysis of your emails with third parties?

*Mr. Pichai. We do not sell any data. I think what you are referring to is users could give API access to third party developers -- for example, there are applications which could give travel-related information. So this is a user choice, and it is an API on top of the platforms. We have done numerous steps to make sure users have to go through multiple steps before they would give consent to a third party.

*Mrs. Lesko. And so I have looked through your Google Privacy Statements and User Content, and I still have concerns about that. I am very concerned. I have Gmail

accounts, just like millions of people, and I don't know if you are looking at them. I don't know who is looking at them. I don't know who is sharing them. I don't know what you are doing with them.

*Mr. Pichai. If I --

*Mrs. Lesko. You make me concerned. Mr. -- I only have --

*Mr. Pichai. If I could clarify one thing I said there?

*Mrs. Lesko. Yes.

*Mr. Pichai. Only if a user asks us to troubleshoot an account, with that user permission. But we do not look into users' email contents, and we do not share the contents with anyone else without the user's asking us to do so.

[redacted]

Mr. Dorsey, Twitter denied the Center for Immigration Studies the ability to promote four tweets that contained the phrases "illegal alien'' and "criminal alien,'' even though those are the correct legal terms. Mr. Dorsey, if there is a warning posted related to a border threat, how will Twitter algorithms react to the use of the word "illegal'' versus "undocumented''?

*Mr. Dorsey. Well, it isn't about our algorithms. It

is interpretation against our policy and if there are violations. But we can follow up with you on how we handle situations like that.

*Mrs. Lesko. Well, this is the legal term, is "illegal alien.'' That is in law, in legal terms. I don't understand why you would not allow that. That is the legal, factual term. And with that, I am going to ask another question.

Mr. Zuckerberg, this has been brought up before. Do you believe that your platform harms children?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I don't believe so. This is something that we study and we care a lot about; designing products that peoples' well-being is very important to us. And what our products do is help people stay connected to people they care about, which I think is one of the most fundamental and important human things that we do, whether that is for teens or for people who are older than that.

And again, our policies on the main apps that we offer generally prohibit people under the age of 13 from using the services.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Mr. O'Halloran for five minutes.

*Mr. O'Halloran. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am enlightened. Thank you to the pane today.

I am enlightened by what I have heard today. Three of the most knowledgeable business people in the word, with beautiful profit centers, business models, a sense of the future direction that your companies want to go in, standards that are in many cases reliable but others not very much so, and a very big concern by the Congress of the United States on the direction you want to go in versus what is good for our Nation in total.

Mr. Zuckerberg, last October Facebook announced it removed a network of 202 accounts, 54 pages, and 76 Instagram accounts for violating your coordinated inappropriate behavior policy. A really forged network was based in [audio disruption] Arizona and ran its disinformation operation from 2018 to 2020 by creating fake accounts and commenting on other people's content about the 2018 midterm election, the 2020 presidential election, COVID-19, and criticism and praise of creation of certain political parties and presidential candidates. [redacted]

While your testimony states since 2017 Facebook has removed over 100 networks of accounts for engaging in coordinated, inauthenticated behavior, where did Facebook fail by not finding this network over the course of a number of years? Mr. Zuckerberg,

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Well, Congressman, we have a team of

-- I think it is more than 300 people who work on counterterrorism at this point, and basically trying to work with law enforcement and across the industry to basically find these networks of fake accounts and authentic accounts that are trying to spread behavior.

And I think we have gotten a lot more effective at this. I can't say that we catch every single one, but certainly I think we have gotten a lot more effective, including just this week we announced that we took down a network of Chinese hackers that were targeting Uyghur activists outside of China.

So we have gotten more sophisticated at this. Sometimes when we start finding a lead, we need to wait to kind of see the full extent of the network so we can take down the whole network. So that is a tradeoff that sometimes we are able to discuss with law enforcement and other times not, in terms of how we do enforcement. But overall, I think this effort has gotten a lot more sophisticated over the last four years.

*Mr. O'Halloran. So you are happy with the amount of personnel that you have working on these issues?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I think we have one of the leading teams in this area. We went from more than --

*Mr. O'Halloran. Are you happy with -- the question was: Are you happy with the amount of people you have working, the capacity that you have to take care of these

issues?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I think that the team is well-staffed and well-funded. We spend billions of dollars a year on these kind of content and integrity and security issues across the company. So I think that that is appropriate to meet the charge. And there are always things that we are going to want to do to improve the tactics of how we find this, and a lot of that over the last several years has been increasing the work that we do with law enforcement and the intelligence community --

*Mr. O'Halloran. I am going to move on to another question, Mr. Zuckerberg. Thank you very much. I do want to say that, again, you are a bright, intelligent CEO. You know in advance what you want. Your algorithms are created by your company and the other companies. You have control over those algorithms.

And so the idea that you have to work maybe in this direction, Mr. Zuckerberg, Facebook's most recent Community Standards enforcement report States that 2.5 million pieces of content related to suicide and self-injury were removed in the fourth quarter of 200 due to increased reviewer capacity.

You can do this if you want to do all this stuff. Very briefly explain what policies Facebook put in place to reviewer capacity, not just on that issue but across the -- how much over time has this occurred that you continue to

increase reviewer capacity?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sure, Congressman. The biggest thing that we have done is automated a lot of this by building AI tools to identify some of this. So now, for example, more than 98 percent of the hate speech that we take down is done by an AI and not by a person. I think it is 98 or 99 percent of the terrorist content that we take down is identified by an AI and not a person. And you mentioned the suicide content as well, which I think a high 90s percent is identified by AI rather than --

*Mr. O'Halloran. Mr. Zuckerberg, I am over my time. I want to thank the chair, and I also want to state very briefly that you have a lot of work to do, you and your other cohorts on this panel. Thank you.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair recognizes Mr. Pence for five minutes.

*Mr. Pence. Thank you, Chairs Doyle and Schakowsky and Ranking Members Latta and Bilirakis, for holding this joint subcommittee meeting hearing. And thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us today.

The extent to which your platforms engulf our lives is reminiscent to the all-encompassing entities we have seen over the past century. In the early 1900s, Standard Oil had a monopoly on over 90 percent of our country's refining business. By the 1970s, if you used a telephone, it was

going to be Ma Bell's system.

In each instant, you could choose not to use either product. But participation in society demanded that you use both. In a similar sense, it is difficult if not impossible to participate in society today without coming across your platforms and using them. We could choose not to use them, but like oil and telecommunications, it is considered essential, and so many other people do use it.

Even the government has become an equal contributor. Each Member of Congress and every Senator is all but required to use your platforms to communicate with their constituents while we are in Washington, D.C. I know you understand that your platforms have a responsibility to act in good faith for Hoosiers and all Americans.

Unfortunately, regularly my Facebook and Twitter accounts, like many of my peers and other people I know, are littered with hateful, nasty arguments between constituents that stand in complete opposition to the ideas of civil discos that your platforms claim to uphold and that you have referenced today.

I am sure you are aware that official government accounts have restrictions that significantly limit our ability to maintain a platform that is a productive resource of information to the public. They have essentially become a micro town hall without a moderator on social media.

I agree with all your testimonies that a trust deficit has been growing over the past several years. And as some of you have suggested, we need to do something about it now. The way in which you manage your platforms in an inconsistent manner, however, has deepened this distrust and devolved the public conversation.

My constituents in Southeast Indiana have told me they are increasingly mistrustful of your platforms, given how you selectively enforce your policies. There are just a few examples of how this has occurred. Members of the Chinese Communist Party have verified Twitter accounts to regularly peddle false and misleading claims surrounding the human rights violations we know are occurring in Northern China.

Twitter gives the Supreme Leader of Iran a megaphone to proclaim derogatory statements endorsing violence against the U.S. and Western culture. Twitter accounts associated with the Supreme Leader have called Israel a "cancerous tumor,'' and called for the eradication of the Zionist regime. This happens as he also bans the service for his own people to restrict their free expression.

Mr. Dorsey, clearly you need to do more to address content that violates your policies. I have two questions for you. Why is the Chinese Communist Party allowed to continue the use of your platform after pushing propaganda to cover up human rights abuses against Muslims in Northern

China? And two, why does the Supreme Leader of Iran still half a platform to make threats against Israel and America?

*Mr. Dorsey. So first and foremost, we do label those Chinese accounts so that people have context as to where they are coming from. That is on every single tweet, so people understand the source. We think that is important.

We are reviewing our world leaders policy. We are actually taking public comment review right now. So we are enabling anyone to give us feedback on how --

*Mr. Pence. If I may interrupt you quickly, Mr. Dorsey, on that very point, Iran has been supporting Hezbollah, and it is not just saber-rattling, as you have made the statement or your company has made the statement. They have done serious damage to whole countries and people, and as I served in the military, they killed hundreds of Marines many years ago. So I don't know what you have to study about this.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back.

The chair recognizes Miss Rice for five minutes.

*Miss Rice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dorsey, what does "Winning: Yes or No?'' on your Twitter account poll?

*Mr. Dorsey. Yes.

*Miss Rice. Hmm. Your multitasking skills are quite impressive.

In December of 2020, the House Committee on Veterans Affairs released a report entitled, "Hijacking Our Heroes: Exploiting Veterans Through Disinformation on Social Media.'' I ask unanimous consent, Mr. Chairman, that this report be submitted for the record.

*Mr. Doyle. So ordered.

[The Committee on Veterans Affairs report follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********

*Miss Rice. Thank you. I bring up the report today because it is very -- deeply disturbing, the investment of our veterans and military service members in the violence that took place on January 6. It is estimated that 1 in 5 people charged in connection with the attack have served or are currently serving in the U.S. military.

It should come as no surprise to those testifying today that for years, nefarious actors have learned how to harness the algorithms on all of your platforms to introduce content to veterans and military service members that they did not actively seek out for themselves. Veterans and military service members are particularly targeted by malicious actors online in order to misappropriate their voices, authority, and credibility for the dissemination of political propaganda.

We have to do better for those who have served our country. Mr. Zuckerberg, do you believe that veterans hold a special status in our communities and have military training, making them prime targets for domestic terrorists and our adversaries seeking to foment insurrection?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I certainly believe that veterans hold a special place in our society. I haven't seen much research --

*Miss Rice. Did you see on the National Mall and at the Capitol there were rioters who arrived in combat gear who

were armed with tactical equipment? Did you see those images, yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Yes.

*Miss Rice. Okay. Have you personally talked to the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, IAVA, about disinformation campaigns targeting veterans?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. No, Congresswoman. I have not personally, although our team certainly is in contact with a number of these groups as we set up our policies.

*Miss Rice. Have you talked to the Vietnam Veterans of America about disinformation campaigns targeting veterans?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I can get back to you on whether our team has consulted with them specifically. But broadly, what our teams --

*Miss Rice. Please do. Do you believe that veterans and military service members are just like other Americans in that they are susceptible to the impulses in human psychology that Facebook exploits to drive engagement? Do you believe that they are susceptible in that way? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, there is a lot in your characterization there that I disagree with.

*Miss Rice. No, no. It is a question of do you think they are susceptible to that kind of information coming at them? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I believe that --

*Miss Rice. Okay. So given your answers, I am not convinced that you have the appropriate resources devoted to the problem of mitigating the real-world effects of content that is designed to mislead and radicalize your users, especially those who are veterans and military service members.

Would you support legislation that would require you to create an Office of Veterans Affairs that reports to the CEO and works with outside veterans service organizations to ensure our enemies don't gain ground trying to radicalize our brave men and women who serve in our military? Would you support that legislation?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I think the details matter a lot. So I would be happy to follow up with you or have our team follow up with your team to discuss this. But in general, I do think that --

*Miss Rice. We will take you up on that, Mr. Zuckerberg. It is just a broad stroke: Do you believe that you could find your way to support legislation that would have as its goal the protection of our military active duty and veterans? In principle?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. I think in principle, I think something like that could certainly make sense.

*Miss Rice. So I wrote to you, Mr. Zuckerberg, last month requesting information about Facebook's efforts to curb

disinformation campaigns that specifically targeted American service members and victims. I am just curious if you know how many public groups with the word "veteran'' or public pages with the word "veteran'' did you remove from your platform after January 6th in association with misinformation about the 2020 election or the attack on the Capitol?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I don't know the answer off the top of my head, but I would be happy to get back to you with that.

*Miss Rice. Thank you. We believe that you should be tracking that information. Your platform was in fact a crime scene after January 6, and we need that information and data to understand how the attack happened.

I want to thank all three of you for coming here today and spending so much time with us. I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady yields back.

The chair recognizes Mr. Armstrong for five minutes. Is Mr. Armstrong here? You need to unmute, Kelly.

*Mr. Armstrong. All right. Sorry about that. Can you hear me?

*Mr. Doyle. Yes. We can hear you.

*Mr. Armstrong. All right. Thank you.

No other industry receives such bipartisan scrutiny -- disinformation, content moderation, de-platforming,

antitrust, privacy, and the list continues to grow. We discuss these things too often in isolation, but they are all related, and it starts with the fact that your users aren't your customers. They are the product. More specifically, the data that you collect from your users is the product.

You are incentivized to collect and monetize user data for behavior advertising. This results in the collection of even more user data. And data is unique as a business asset. It doesn't deplete. Data is perpetual and reinforcing. Data begets more data. Massive data collection expands your market share, which harms competition.

That is why censorship is so concerning to all of us. Your platforms have a stranglehold on the flow of modern communication, and I think we absolutely have to resist the urge of content moderation and censorship. In 1927, Justice Brandeis wrote: "The remedy to apply is more speech, not enforced silence.'' I think that statement still holds true today.

Yet your platforms don't simply silence certain speech. Your algorithms are designed to reinforce existing predispositions because you profit by keeping users locked into what they already enjoy. This leads to information siloes, misinformation, extremism on both sides, and even more data collection, which repeats the cycle.

Mr. Pichai, you testified before the House Judiciary

Committee last year, and at that hearing I raised several examples of Google's consolidation of the ad tech stack. Your answers large reiterated the privacy justifications, which I understand and support. However, my question was whether Google's consolidation of both the buy and sell sides of digital advertising would further harm competition.

Since then I have reviewed Google's privacy sandbox and the FLoC proposal, which is an alternative group identifier to replace third party cookies. Again, I understand and I appreciate the privacy justification. But -- and this is my question -- how will these actions not further entrench Google's digital advertising market share and harm competition?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, as you rightfully point out, privacy is really important and we are trying to get that correct. Users are giving clear feedback in terms of the direction they would like to take. Advertising allows us to provide services to many people who wouldn't otherwise be able to use services, and we are trying to provide relevant ads, protecting their privacy. And that is what FLoC is working on. We will --

*Mr. Armstrong. I am going to move on because I understand the privacy -- I understand the privacy. And I understand the rationale of eliminating individual-level tracking in favor of cohorts and the potential privacy

benefits of user data in CRO method device level.

But this is still eliminating competitors' access to user data at a time when you already control 60 percent of the browser market. I have real concerns that FLoC will incentivize more first party data collection, which will not actually benefit user privacy; instead of spreading it amongst a lot of different companies, it will just all be with you. And so I guess my point is Congress needs to conduct careful oversight as the privacy sandbox and FLoC are introduced. And we need to ensure that the user privacy increases, and that competition is not stifled further.

But I do have one question, and it is important. I am going to ask all three of you. When we are conducting competition analysis in the tech industry, should non-price factors like privacy be considered? And I will start with you, Mr. Pichai.

*Mr. Pichai. I think so. I think privacy is very important, and we have called for comprehensive Federal privacy legislation. And to clarify, Google doesn't get any access to FLoC data. It is protected. And then we will publish more papers on it.

*Mr. Armstrong. All right. And I understand completely. But you are forcing -- I mean, you are forcing advertisers into the ad stack. I mean, that is -- I don't discount it increases privacy. That is not -- I think this

is a real problem because I think they are in conflict with each other.

But Mr. Dorsey, do you think when we are conducting competition analysis in the tech industry, non-price factors should be considered?

*Mr. Dorsey. Not sure exactly what you mean, but open to further discussion on it.

*Mr. Armstrong. All right. How about you, Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Yes, Congressman. My understanding is that the law already includes the quality of products in addition to price.

*Mr. Armstrong. And I will just say I appreciate you talking about the difference between big platforms and small platforms because I think in our history of trying to regulate big companies, Congress has already done a really good job at harming the smaller companies worse.

And with my last six seconds because this isn't the appropriate hearing, but I am going to ask, please all do a better job of making sure artists get paid for their work on your platforms. And with that, I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back.

The chair recognizes Mr. Veasey for five minutes.

*Mr. Veasey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It has often been said that lies travel faster than

truth, and we have seen that play out with devastating consequences on social media platforms today. This concerns me greatly, not just as a father or a lawmaker but as someone ready to see the past divisions that have dominated our country for the past several years, and really decades, really.

But it is hard to see how this can change when the CEOs of the largest social media platforms repeatedly say they will fix their ways, only to keep spreading harmful lies and misinformation. I want to give you an example.

Last August here in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, the North Texas Poison Control Center felt the need to warn people against ingesting bleach or other disinfecting products as a cure to prevent COVID-19. Despite efforts of your companies to take down such harmful mis- or disinformation calls to the North Texas Poison Control Center about disinfectant, ingestion rates were much higher than usual, and statewide calls about bleach products were up over 70 percent compared to the year before. The North Texas Poison Center pointed this out largely to misinformation online as the cause for these increases.

And as we know, in the lead-up to the last elections, black communities were specifically targeted for disinformation campaigns designed to suppress the vote, especially in battleground states. And right now there are

sites up that are discouraging black people from getting the COVID-19 vaccination. I know a lady that was put in Facebook jail for 30 days because all she did was repost one of the faulty posts saying black folks aren't falling for this business, and she was put in Facebook jail for 30 days.

Now, even if these posts were eventually taken down or otherwise labeled as false, again lies travel a lot faster than truths. Your companies have been largely flat-footed when it comes to getting out ahead of these issues, and it is time for something to change.

That is why I am exploring legislation that would establish an independent organization of researchers and computer scientists who could help by identifying and warn about misinformation trends before they become viral. This early warning system would help social media sites, the public, and law enforcement so that when dangerous conspiracies or disinformation is spreading, they can be on alert and hopefully slow its effect.

Mr. Zuckerberg, would you support legislation that would alert all Facebook or Instagram users of harmful disinformation and conspiracy theories spreading across your platforms?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I think we need to look into that in more detail to understand the nuances. But in general, I agree that it is our responsibility to build

systems that can help slow the spread of this kind of misinformation. And that is why we have taken all the steps that I have outlined today, from building in an unprecedented independent fact-checking program to taking down content that could cause imminent physical harm to the work in the COVID Information Center and the Voting Information Center and the Climate Information Center to promote authoritative information across our services. So I certainly think that there is a lot to do here.

*Mr. Armstrong. Mr. Dorsey, would you support legislation for an early warning system across Twitter?

*Mr. Dorsey. I would be open to reviewing the details. I just don't think it will be effective. And it will be very much whack-a-mole. I think that the more important thing is to, as I said in my opening remarks, get much more of an open standard and protocol that have everyone can have access to and review.

*Mr. Armstrong. And Mr. Pichai? For Google and YouTube and that? I have a 14-year-old at home that watches YouTube. What about you for those platforms?

*Mr. Pichai. Already today in many of these areas, we show, proactively, information panels. So for example, on COVID, we have showed a lot of information from CDC and other experts, and we had views of over 400 billion. And so conceptually, showing proactive information, including

information panes, I think makes sense to me.

*Mr. Armstrong. Okay. Well, thank you. I appreciate the time, Mr. Chairman. I am worried. I think that we need to act quickly and that we are running out of time and that we need these companies to take affirmative action on addressing some of these issues.

I yield back my time. Thank you.

*Mr. Doyle. I thank the gentleman. The gentleman yields back.

The chair now yields five minutes to Ms. Craig.

*Ms. Craig. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Zuckerberg, thank you so much for joining us today. As co-chair of the LGBTQ Equality Caucus in the U.S. Congress, I would like to ask you a few questions about an incident that occurred several weeks ago now. And I would appreciate a simple yes or no answer. Most of these have absolutely no room for nuance. These aren't trick questions. I would just like to clarify a few facts.

So on February 25th, Facebook took down a video hosted by my colleague, Representative Marie Newman, in which she places the transgender flag outside her office. Is that correct, to your knowledge? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I am not aware of this.

*Ms. Craig. You are not aware of this?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. No.

*Ms. Craig. Well, the answer is yes. Facebook took her video down. According to Representative Newman, the reason Facebook gave for taking down the video was that it violated Facebook's community standards on hate speech and inferiority. Does that seem right to you, that if someone put up a trans flag and took a video of it and posted it on your platform, that it should be put down?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, no. That doesn't seem right to me. But I would need to understand the specifics of the case in more details.

*Ms. Craig. Yes. Thank you. The answer is no, it is absolutely not right.

Meanwhile, across the hall, Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene from Georgia posted a video to Facebook. Her video showed her putting up a transphobic sign so that Representative Newman, the mother of a trans child, could "look at it every time she opens her door.'' Facebook allowed Representative Greene's video to remain online. Is that right? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I am not aware of the specifics. But as I have said a number of times today, we do make mistakes, unfortunately, in our content moderation, and we hope to fix them as quickly as possible --

*Ms. Craig. Reclaiming my time, reclaiming my time, the answer was yes, Representative Greene's video was allowed to

remain online. Representative Newman reached out to Facebook, and a few hours later her video was restored with a perfunctory apology. But Representative Greene's video was never taken down. I am not even going to ask you if I am getting that right, as I was, because you obviously don't know.

Are you aware that Facebook has repeatedly flagged the transgender flag as hate speech and that trans-positive content ends up being taken down while transphobic content, like Representative Greene's video, is not taken down and is often shared widely? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I am now aware of that specifically, but this is an instance of a broader challenge in identifying hate speech, which is that there is often a very nuanced difference between someone saying something that is racist versus saying something to denounce something that someone else said that was racist.

And we need to build systems that handle this content in more than 150 languages around the world, and we need to do it quickly. And unfortunately, there are some mistakes in trying to do this quickly and effectively.

*Ms. Craig. Mr. Zuckerberg, I am going to give you your nuance this one time.

As it exists today, do you think your company is going to get these content moderation decisions right on the first

try eventually?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, if what you are asking is are we ever going to be perfect, the answer is no. I think that there will always be some mistakes, but I think we will get increasingly accurate over time. So for example, a few years back, we identified --

*Ms. Craig. Mr. Zuckerberg, I only have a couple of minutes or one minutes left, so I am going to continue here.

As has been mentioned repeatedly throughout today, we just don't have faith that your companies have the proper incentives to proactively contemplate and address basic human rights. With that in mind, would you support legislation requiring social media companies to have an Office of Civil Rights reporting to the CEO, and that would mean you would have to reconsider your corporate structure, including the civil rights and human rights of the trans community?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, we took the unprecedented step of hiring a VP of civil rights, and I think we are one of the only companies that has done something similar to what you are saying.

*Ms. Craig. Well, I hope that you do better, then, because this example I am giving you was completely unacceptable. This panel has done something truly rare in Washington these days: It has united Democrats and Republicans. Your industry cannot be trusted to regulate

itself.

And with that, I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady yields back.

The chair now recognizes Mrs. Trahan for five minutes.

*Mrs. Trahan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to turn the focus back to our children. My husband and I have five. Our oldest is 27, our youngest is 6, and over the years I have noticed how technology has been increasingly designed to capture their attention. The more time my first-grader spends scrolling through an app, the less time she is playing outside or enjoying face-to-face interactions with us.

Google and Facebook are not only doing a poor job of keeping our children under 13 off of YouTube and Instagram, as my colleagues have already mentioned today, but you are actively onboarding our children onto your ecosystems with apps like YouTube Kids, Facebook Messenger Kids, and now we are hearing Instagram for Kids. These applications introduce our children to social media far too early and include manipulative design features intended to keep them hooked.

Mr. Pichai, when a child finishes a video on YouTube or YouTube Kids, does the next video automatically play by default? And I think this one is a yes or no.

*Mr. Pichai. Sorry, I was muted. Congresswoman, I have children, too. I worry about the time they spend online, and

I agree with you it is an important issue.

*Mrs. Trahan. Yes.

*Mr. Pichai. We design YouTube --

*Mrs. Trahan. The autoplay function by default? That is a yes --

*Mr. Pichai. On the main app, it is there, and for each video there is an easy on/off toggle. Users have preference to select --

*Mrs. Trahan. But the default setting is yes. When a user who is predicted to be a teen is watching a YouTube video, are the number of likes displayed by default? Yes or no, please?

*Mr. Pichai. On all videos, I think we do have -- across all videos we have.

*Mrs. Trahan. Right. And Mr. Zuckerberg, will the recently reported Instagram app for kids have endless scroll enabled? Yes or no?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sorry. Congresswoman, we are not done finalizing what the app is going to be. I think we are still pretty early in designing this. But I just want to say that --

*Mrs. Trahan. Are you not sure or are you not sharing features or -- and look, another feature of concern is the filter 6that adds an unnatural but perfect glow for my 10-year-old to apply to her face. Is that feature going to be

part of Instagram for Kids?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I don't know. I haven't discussed this with the team yet.

*Mrs. Trahan. Well, look. Please expect my office and many others to follow up, given what we know about Instagram's impact on teen mental health. We are all very concerned about our younger children.

And I just want to speak mother to father for a moment, fathers, because leading experts all acknowledge that social media sites pose risks to young people -- inappropriate content, over-sharing of personal information, cyberbullying, deceptive advertising -- the list goes on. And those risks are exacerbated with more time children spend in these apps.

Mr. Pichai, you mentioned that you have children, and I have also read you limit their screen time. What do you say when one of your children doesn't want to put their phone down?

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, the struggle is the same, particularly through COVID. It has been hard to moderate it. And I do take advantage of the parental controls and the digital well-being tools. We can limit the time on their apps. And so we have prohibitions in place.

*Mrs. Trahan. I don't mean to cut you off, Mr. Pichai. But the last thing overworked parents read right now, especially right now, are more complex to-dos, which is what

parental controls are. They need child-centric design by default.

Mr. Zuckerberg, I understand your children are younger. But when they start using social media, what will you say when they are craving their tablet over spending time face-to-face with you or with friends?

*Mrs. Trahan. Well, congresswoman, we haven't gotten to that point yet. But we are designing all of these tools -- we designed Messenger Kids that the parents are in control. I think we have proven that that can be a good and safe experience. And I think that was one of the things that made us think that we should consider doing this for Instagram as well, by having it so that we have a parent-controlled experience, and as you say, child-centric experience for people under the age of 13 --

*Mrs. Trahan. I am going -- I am going to reclaim my time, only because. Connecting with others is one thing. Adding filters, no breaks for kids to take, and manipulating the design of these apps for our children is another. Look. This committee is ready to legislate to protect our children from your ambition.

What we are having a hard time reconciling is that while you are publicly calling for regulation, which, by the way, comes off as incredibly decent and noble, you are plotting your next frontier of growth, which deviously targets our

young children and which you all take great strides, with infinitely more resources, in protecting your own children.

This playbook is familiar. As some of my colleagues have pointed out, it is the same tactic we saw from alcohol companies and big tobacco: Start 'em young and bank on them never leaving, or at least never being able to. But there are our children, and their health and well-being deserve to take priority over your profits.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes Mrs. Fletcher for five minutes.

*Mrs. Fletcher. Thank you, Chairman Doyle. And thanks to you and Chairwoman Schakowsky and Ranking Members Latta and Bilirakis for holding this hearing today. I agree with my colleagues. There is a broad consensus on a range of issues, and I appreciate the discussion.

As we have discussed extensively today, one of the big challenges of this rise of dangerous disinformation is that it denies us a basic set of sheet facts to enable and information debate like what we are having here today. And it is absolutely vital that we take charge and that we address this.

What we have seen is that countries whose interests are not aligned with ours, extremist organizations and others, have used online social media platforms to engage and to amplify extremist content and disinformation, from the COVID-

19 pandemic to the January 6 insurrection, both of which we have talked about extensively.

We have seen that the real-world cost of this unchecked spread of disinformation is in lies. And like my colleagues, I worry that the structure of many social media companies, including those we have before us today, prioritize engagement, including engagement with provocative or extremist content over responsible corporate citizenship.

So one of my greatest concerns regarding how extremist content and disinformation is allowed to spread on your platform is the lack of data transparency when it comes to independent analysis. Now, everyone has claimed they have an internal system, that it is about the systems, that you need good systems to remove and delete disinformation and extremist content.

But we have no way to verify how effective those systems are. And that is a huge part of the challenge before us. I think we all would agree that we need data and information to make good policy and to write good legislation, which will be coming out of this committee.

So that brings me to a follow-up on my colleague Miss Rice's questions about data. As she mentioned, and it is my understanding that all three of your platforms chose to remove content that was posted regarding the Capitol insurrection on January 6. And I think we can all understand

some of the reasons for that. But as a result, it is unavailable to researchers and to Congress.

So my question for each of you is: Will you commit to sharing the removed content with Congress to inform our information of the events of January 6 and also the issues before us today about how to respond to extremist and dangerous content online?

And I will start with Mr. Zuckerberg.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Thanks, Congresswoman. When we take down content that might be connected to a crime, I think we do, as a standard practice, try to maintain that so that we can share it with law enforcement if necessary. And I am sure our team can follow up to discuss that with you as well.

*Mr. Doyle. Sure. I appreciate that. And I understand that you have a legal obligation to cooperate with authorities and law enforcement in these cases. And I think that what I am talking about is also sharing it with us in Congress, and I appreciate your response there.

Mr. Dorsey?

*Mr. Dorsey. We would like to do this, actually. We have been thinking about a program for researchers to get access to actions that we had to take. But all of this is subject to local laws, of course.

*Mrs. Fletcher. Well, and that may be something that we can help craft here. So I think that it is consistently

something we have heard from researchers as well. It is a real area of challenge in not having the data. So I appreciate that.

And Mr. Pichai? Do you also agree?

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, sorry, I was muted. We are working with law enforcement, and happy to connect with your office. And we cooperate as allowed by law while balancing the privacy of the people involved.

*Mrs. Fletcher. Well, thank you. So I appreciate all of your willingness to work with us and to assist Congress in addressing this attack on our Capitol and our country.

Another idea that I would like to touch base with you on in the time I have left, just over a minute. Is the difference we see in how your platforms handle foreign extremist content versus domestic content? By all accounts, your platforms do a better job of combating posts and information from foreign terrorist organizations, or FTOs, like ISIS or al-Qaeda and others, where the posts are automatically removed, depending on keywords and phrases, et cetera.

The FTOs are designated by the State Department. There are rigorous criteria to identify groups that wish to cause harm to Americans. Currently there is no legal mechanism or definition for doing the same for domestic terror and hate groups.

Would a federal standard for defining a domestic terror organization similar to FTOs help your platforms better track and remove harmful content from your sites? Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I am not sure. I think domestically we do classify a number of white supremacist organizations and militias and conspiracy networks like QAnon is the same level of problematic as some of these other organizations that are able to take decisive action.

I think where the sense of being more complicated is where the content is --

*Mrs. Fletcher. I hate to cut off, but I am going to run out of time. So your answer was, I am not sure. Could I just get a quick yes or no from Mr. Dorsey and Mr. Pichai?

*Mr. Doyle. Yes, but very quickly because your time is expired. Very quickly.

*Mr. Dorsey. We need to evaluate it. We need to understand what that means.

*Mrs. Fletcher. Mr. Pichai?

*Mr. Pichai. We as domestic agencies focus on that, I think we are happy to work and cooperate there.

*Mr. Doyle. Okay. The gentlelady's time is expired.

*Mrs. Fletcher. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. It is my understanding we have -- let's see -- eight members who were requesting to waive on for the

hearing. I believe we have given all members of the subcommittees their opportunity to speak. So we will now start to recognize the members waiving on. And first on the list here I see Mr. Burgess. Doc Burgess, are you with us?

*Mr. Burgess. Yes. Sorry. I couldn't find my cursor.

*Mr. Doyle. Okay. You are recognized for five minutes.

*Mr. Burgess. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thanks to our witnesses for spending so much time with us. This is clearly a very important issue to every member of this committee regardless of which political party they identify with.

I guess, Mr. Zuckerberg, let me just ask you a question because it strikes me, listening to your answers to both our colleague, Jeff Duncan, and our colleague, Angie Craig, both coming at the issue from different directions, but the concern is that there was the exercise of editorial authority over the postings that were made on your website. Is that a fair assessment?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I am not sure what you mean. But I think content moderation and enforcing standards, I don't think that that is the same kind of editorial judgment that, for example, a newspaper makes when writing a post.

*Mr. Burgess. Yes. But maybe it is because Mr. Duncan eloquently pointed out there was restriction of conservative

speech. And our colleague, Angie Craig, eloquently pointed out how there was restriction of trans-affirming speech. So that strikes that me that we are getting awfully close to the line of exercising editorial discretion.

And forgive me for thinking that way, but if that is -- and I am sure I am not alone in this -- it does call into question, then, the immunity provided under Section 230. Maybe it is not a problem with law itself, Section 230; maybe the problem is that the mission has changed in your organization and other organizations.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I am not sure what you mean. But we have clear standards against things like terrorist content, child exploitation, incitement of violence, intellectual property violations, pornography -- things that I would imagine that you agree with. And we can enforce --

*Mr. Burgess. All spelled out in the plain language of Section 230. But again, you are putting restrictions on conservative speech. Mr. Duncan eloquently pointed out how that is occurring. Angie Craig eloquently pointed out how you are putting restrictions on trans-affirming speech. None of those fall into any of the other categories that you are describing.

Because to the casual observer, it appears that you are exercising editorial authority, and as such, maybe you should

be regulated as a publisher as opposed to simply someone who is carrying -- who is indifferent to the content that they are carrying.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I think one of the virtues of Section 230 is it allows companies to moderate things like bullying that are not always clearly illegal content but that I think you and I would probably agree are harmful and bad.

So I think it is important that companies have the ability to go beyond what is legally required. I do not think that that makes these internet platforms the same thing as a news publisher who is literally writing the content themselves. I do think we have more responsibility than maybe a telephone network, where --

*Mr. Burgess. Let me interrupt you in the interest of time because I want to pose the same question to Mr. Dorsey.

Mr. Dorsey, every presidential tweet that I read following the election had an editorial disclaimer appended to it by you. How does that not make you someone who is exercising editorial discretion on the content that you are carrying?

*Mr. Dorsey. Our goal with our labels was simply to provide connection to other data and provide context.

*Mr. Burgess. Yes. But you don't do that routinely with other tweets. It seemed to be a singular assignment

that someone had taken on, to look at whatever the President is publishing. We are going to put our own spin on that. And again, that strikes me as an editorial exercise.

And the only reason I bring this up, and we are going to have these discussions, I recognize that smaller companies just starting out, the protection of Section 230 may be invaluable to them. But you all are no longer just starting out. You are established. You are mature companies. You exercise enormous control over the thought processes of not just an entire country but literally the entire world. You are exercising editorial discretion. I do think we need to revisit Section 230 in the terms of, have you now become actual publishers as opposed to simply carriers of information?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back.

The chair recognizes Mr. Tonko for five minutes.

*Mr. Tonko. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for allowing me to waive on.

Gentlemen, thank you for being with us today. While there are many issues I would like to raise with you, my most pressing unresolved questions revolve around what I saw and experienced on January 6, when I had to dive for cover in the House gallery as violent insurrectionists attempted to break down the doors and take the chamber.

The rioters who breached the Capitol building were propelled by at least one bully that the election had been stolen from former President Donald Trump. They reached this false and dangerous conclusion, yet somehow in massive numbers. Their assault was not disorganized or isolated, and it was not coincidence.

So Mr. Zuckerberg, you and your colleagues have downplayed the role Facebook played in helping the rioters mobilize in January 6. In light of growing evidence that suggests otherwise, including the fact that Facebook was the most cited social media cite in charging documents the Department of Justice filed against insurrectionists, do you still deny that your platform was used as a significant megaphone for the lies that fueled the insurrection?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, to be clear, I think part of the reason why our services are very cited in the charging docs is because we worked closely with law enforcement to help identify the people who were there. So I don't view that that collaboration with law enforcement should be seen as a negative reflection on our services.

And as I have said a number of times to today, there was content on our services from some of these folks. I think that that was problematic. But by and large, I also think that by putting in place policies banning QAnon, banning militias, banning other conspiracy networks, we generally

made our services inhospitable to a lot of these folks. And that had the unfortunate consequence of having those folks not use Facebook and use other places as well.

So there is certainly more for us to do. But I stand behind the work that we have done with law enforcement on this and the systems that we have in place.

*Mr. Tonko. Thank you.

Mr. Pichai, can you affirmatively state that YouTube did not recommend videos with Stop the Steal content, white supremacy content, and other hate and conspiracy content that was seen by rioters at the Capitol?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, we had clear policies and we were vigorously enforcing this area. Just leading up to the election, we had removed hundreds of thousands of videos, and we had terminated 8,000 channels. And on the day of the riot, we were successfully able to take down inappropriate livestreams. We gave precedence to journalistic organizations covering the event. And that is the content we raised up on YouTube that day. And since then we have been cooperating with law enforcement as well.

*Mr. Tonko. So you're indicating that you did not recommend videos with Stop the Steal?

*Mr. Pichai. We were rigorously enforcing. We had clear policies around content that undermined election integrity. Once the States certified the election on

December 8th, we introduced a "Sensitive Events'' policy and we did take down videos which were violative. And so we have been monitoring it very closely.

*Mr. Tonko. Thank you.

And Mr. Dorsey, are you confident that the conspiracy theorists or other purveyors of electrical misinformation and Stop the Steal on Twitter were not recommending to others?

*Mr. Dorsey. I can't say that I was confident, but I know we did work really hard to make sure that if we saw any amplification that went against the terms of service, which this would, we took an action immediately. We didn't have any up-front indication that this would happen, so we had to react to it quite quickly.

*Mr. Tonko. All right. Thank you. And who and what content your platforms recommend have real-world consequences, and the riot caused five deaths and shook our democratic foundations. And I believe that your platforms are responsible for the content you promote, and look forward to working with my colleagues to determine how to hold you accountable.

Mr. Pichai, Google and YouTube often slip under the radar as a source of disinformation. But in the last election, bad actors used ads on Google Search to scam people looking for voting information, and YouTube failed to remove videos that spread misinformation about the 2020 vote

results.

So Mr. Pichai, when journalists pointed out in November that election misinformation was rampant on Google's YouTube, the company said it was allowing discussions of election processes and results. A month later YouTube said it would remove new content alleging widespread voter fraud in the 2020 election. Why did YouTube wait a month to take action on election misinformation?

*Mr. Pichai. If I could clarify here, we were taking down videos leading up to the election. There is obviously a month from the date of election till there are due processes, co-challenges, and we waited till this -- we consulted with CISPA and Association of Secretaries of State. And on December 8, when the States certified the election, we started enforcing newer policies on December 9th.

To be very clear, we were showing information from the Associated Press, and we were proactively showing information high up in our search results to give relevant information throughout this election cycle.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

*Mr. Tonko. Thank you. Mr. Chair, I yield back.

The chair recognizes Mr. McKinley for five minutes.

*Mr. McKinley. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And this panel, you all have to be exhausted after being grilled all day long like this. So my questions are to Mr.

Zuckerberg.

When you came before our committee in 2018, you acknowledged that Facebook had used what you just said, "clear standards,'' preventing the sale of illegal drugs on your site. But you were shown examples of active posts that traffickers were still using that platform unlawfully to sell prescription opioids. You did apologize and confirm that: "Social media companies needs to do a better job of policing these posts.''

Now, three years later it appears a shell game is emerging. Facebook seems to have cleaned up its act, but you are now allowing Instagram, one of your subsidies, to become the new vehicle. Even though Instagram has the same policies against the sale of illegal substances, you are still allowing bad actors to push pills on your site.

It didn't take long for our staff to find numerous examples. For example, here is oxycodone that is being sold on your site. Here is Ritalin that is being sold on your site. Here is Xanax and Adderall that is being sold on your site. So these posts have -- they are not new. They have been active since last fall.

If we can find posts this easily, shame on you for not finding them for yourself. Apparently you are not taking the warnings of Congress seriously. After drug manufacturers dumped millions of pills in our community, killing thousands,

ravaging families, and destroying livelihoods, Congress responded by passing laws to hold them liable.

If a retail store is selling cigarettes to underage kids, that store is held liable. So why shouldn't you be held liable as well? Do you think you are above the law? You are knowingly allowing this poison to be sold on your platform into our communities, to our children, to our vulnerable adults.

Look. I have read Scott Galloway's book "The Four.'' I encourage all the members on this committee to read his book. It is a perfect depiction of the arrogance of Big Tech companies like Facebook, Google, Apple, and Amazon. He develops a very compelling argument as to why Big Tech companies should be broken into smaller companies, much like that occurred to AT&T in 1984.

Maybe it is time for Congress to have an adult conversation about this loss of liability protection and the need to reform our antitrust laws. I don't think Congress wants to tell you how to run your company, but maybe it should.

So Mr. Zuckerberg, let me close with this one question. Don't you think you would find a way to stop these illegal sales on your platforms if you were held personally liable?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. I keep on getting muted. Congressman, we don't want any of this content on our platforms, and I

agree with you that this is a huge issue. We have devoted a lot of resources and have built systems that are largely quite effective at finding and removing the content. But I just think that what we all need to understand is that at the scale that these communities operate, where people are sharing millions or, in messages, billions of things a day, it is inevitable that we will not find everything, just like a police force in a city will not stop every single crime.

*Mr. McKinley. I agree.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. So I think that we should --

*Mr. McKinley. But I ask you the question very directly, Mark. Should you not be held liable when people are dying because your people are allowing these sales to take place? We did it with manufacturers. We do it to the stores. Why aren't we doing it to the salesman that allows this to take place?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Well, Congressman, I don't think we are allowing this to take place. We are building systems that take the vast majority of this content off our systems. And what I am saying --

*Mr. McKinley. We have been dealing with this for three years, Mark. Three years this has been going on. And you said you were going to take care of it last time, but all you do is switch from Facebook over to Instagram. They are still doing it now. And you are saying, we need to do more.

Well, how many more families are going to die? How many more children are going to be addicted by you still studying the problem? I think you need to be held liable.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, we are not sitting and studying the problem. We are building effective systems that work across both Facebook and Instagram. But what I am saying is that I don't think that we can expect that any platform will find every instance of harmful content. I think we should hold the platforms to be responsible for building generally effective systems at moderating these kinds of content.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

*Mr. McKinley. I am not going to get an answer, Mike. Thank you.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back. The chair recognizes Ms. Blunt Rochester for five minutes.

*Ms. Blunt Rochester. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to waive onto this important hearing. And thank you to the witnesses.

I want to focus on two areas: first, a consumer protection and safety issue, and second, more broadly, manipulation and privacy of our data. On consumer protection and safety, earlier this year two infants from two different families ended up in the intensive care unit in Wilmington, Delaware after being fed homemade baby formula based on

instructional videos viewed on YouTube.

One infant suffered from cardiac arrest that resulted in brain damage. For years, the American Academy of Pediatrics has warned parents against homemade baby formulas because it puts infants at risk of serious illness and even death. And since at least 2018, the FDA has recommended against the use of homemade formula. Even as recent as 29 days ago, the FDA issued an advisory against homemade formula.

In February, my office informed your team, Mr. Pichai, and as a follow-up I have sent a letter requesting information and action on this issue in the hopes of a response by April 1st. Mr. Pichai, this is just a yes or no question: Can I count on a response to my letter by the deadline of April 1st?

*Mr. Pichai. Congresswoman, Definitely yes. Heartbreaking to hear the stories. We have clear policies. Thanks for your highlighting this. I think the videos have been taken down, and we are happy to follow up and update the team.

*Ms. Blunt Rochester. We checked today. For years, these videos have clearly violated your own stated policy of banning the videos that endanger the, as you say, "physical well-being of minors.'' And so I am pleased to hear that we will be hearing back from you.

And while we are considering Section 230, what is clear

from this hearing is that we should all be concerned by all of your abilities to adequately -- and just as importantly, rapidly -- moderate content. In some of these cases, we are talking life and death.

Second, as many of my colleagues have noted, your companies profit when users fall down the rabbit hole of disinformation. The spread of disinformation is an issue all of us grapple with from all across the political specimen. Disinformation often finds its way to the people most susceptible to it because the profiles that you create through massive data collection suggest what they will be receptive to.

I introduced the DETOUR Act to address common tactics that are used to get such personal data as possible. And these tactics are often called "dark patterns,'' and they are intentionally deceptive user interfaces that trick people into handing over their data.

For the people at home, many of you may know this as when you go on an app, it doesn't allow you to have a no option, or it will insinuate that you need to do something else, install another program like Facebook Messenger app to get on Facebook.

You all collect and use this information. Mr. Pichai, yes or no: Would you oppose legislation that banned the use of intentionally manipulative design techniques that trick

users into giving up their personal information?

*Mr. Pichai. We definitely are happy to have oversight on these areas and explain what to do.

*Ms. Blunt Rochester. Thank you. I have to go to Mr. Dorsey. Mr. Dorsey, yes or no?

*Mr. Dorsey. Open to it.

*Ms. Blunt Rochester. Mr. Zuckerberg?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I think the --

*Ms. Blunt Rochester. Yes or no, please.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. -- principle makes sense and the details matter.

*Ms. Blunt Rochester. Okay. Mr. Zuckerberg, your company recently conducted this massive ad campaign on how far the internet has come in the last 25 years. Great ad. You end it with a statement: "We support updated internet regulations to address today's challenges.'' Unfortunately, the proposal that you direct your viewers to fails to address dark patterns, user manipulation, or deceptive design choices.

Mr. Zuckerberg, will you commit now to include deceptive design choices as part of your platform for better internet regulations?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I will think about it. My initial response is that I feel there are other areas that I think might be more urgently in need.

*Ms. Blunt Rochester. That might be your -- if you say this is a desire of yours to address the issues that we face today, dark patterns goes back to 2010, this whole issue of deceptive practices. And I hope that you will look into it.

I will say -- Mrs. Trahan and others have mentioned -- she mentioned our children. Others have mentioned seniors, veterans, people of color, even our very democracy, is at stake here. We must act and assure you -- we will assure you we will act.

Thank you so much, and Mr. Chairman, I yield back six seconds.

*Mr. Doyle. I thank the gentlelady. The gentlelady yields back.

And now the chair recognizes Mr. Griffith for five minutes.

*Mr. Griffith. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

According to new data from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Siler Pythian found the vast majority of child exploitation reports from Big Tech sites. Facebook had the most, 20.3 million. Google was second with 546,000 plus. Twitter had 65,000 plus. Put in perspective, MindGeek, the Canada-based parent company of major portion websites, had 13,229. Facebook claims 90 percent of the flagged incidents were duplicates. All right. Let's accept that. That still leaves over 2 million incidents --

2 million incidents.

Mr. Zuckerberg, yes or no, does Facebook have a problem with child exploitation on its platform?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, this is an area that we work on a lot. But the recent why those numbers are so high is because we are so proactive about trying to find this and send it to NCMEC and others who are doing good work in this area. We sent content and flags over to them quite liberally, whenever we think that we might see that something is at issue.

And that is, I think, what the public should want us to do, not criticize us for sending over a large number of flags but should encourage the companies to do it.

*Mr. Griffith. So you are admitting that you all have a problem and this is one way you are trying to work on it.

Mr. Pichai, yes or no: Do you agree with Mr. Zuckerberg that you all have a problem? Are you there?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, sorry, I was muted. This is an area which we invest very heavily. We have been praised by several authorities. We work proactively --

*Mr. Griffith. So the answer is yes.

Mr. Dorsey, yes or no: Do you agree?

*Mr. Dorsey. If we see any problems, we try to resolve them as quickly as possible.

*Mr. Griffith. But you do have problems, and that is

why you are trying to resolve them. I get that. The problem is, when you are talking about millions of incidents, and we take 90 percent of them as duplicates from the Facebook data, that is millions of incidents that are happening where our children are being exploited with child pornography on you all's sites. We have got to do better.

I think you all need, for everything that we have talked about today, an independent industry-wide review team like the electronic industry did with the Underwriters Laboratory nearly 150 years ago. I told you all that when you were here before. Nobody has done anything. I don't think it needs to be within your company. I think it needs to be outside.

And on that vein, I would say to Google, special permission was given to Moonshot CVE to target ads against extremist keywords. Moonshot then directed thousands of individuals who searched for violent content to videos and posts of a convicted felon who espouses anti-law enforcement, anti-Semitic, and anarchist viewpoints.

Mr. Pichai, are you aware of this problem?

*Mr. Pichai. Congressman, I am not aware of the specific issue. Last year we blocked over 3.1 billion bad ads, 6,000 ads per minute. And so we enforce vigorously. But I am happy to look into this specific issue and follow up back with you.

*Mr. Griffith. Well, here is what happened. You

partnered with an outside group that didn't do their job. What are your standards when you partner with an outside group? What are your standards and what are your philosophy? Because they sent people who were already looking for violence to a convicted felon with anarchist and anti-Semitic views.

*Mr. Pichai. There is no place for hate speech, and I am disappointed to hear of this. We will definitely look into it and follow up back with you.

*Mr. Griffith. Well, and I appreciate that. I recognize that. But I have the same concerns that Mr. McKinley had. And you weren't here last time, but we heard these same kinds of things about how we are going to work on it and how we are going to get these problems resolved. And I forget when that hearing was, but a year or so ago.

And yet we continue to have the same problems, where political candidates' information is being taken down because for some reason it is flagged; where conservatives and people on the left are being hit and taken down. And I agree with many of the sentiments on both side of the aisle that if you all aren't doing anything, and it appears that you are not moving fast enough, we have no choice in Congress but to take action.

I don't want to. I would rather see you all do it, like

the electric industry did with Underwriters Laboratory. But nobody is doing that. Nobody is coming up with a group that both sides of the aisle and the American families can feel comfortable with. And so we are going to have to take action, and it is probably going to be this year.

I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman yields back.

The chair recognizes Ms. Schrier for five minutes.

*Ms. Schrier. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am a pediatrician, and I have spent my life calming patients who are nervous about vaccines because of online misinformation. In fact, that is why I introduced a Vaccines Act when I was a new Member of Congress. Did you know that there are doctors who, after spending their entire day on the front line fighting this virus, come home at night and spend their scarce free time and family time fighting misinformation about vaccines online? And this misinformation, of course, comes primarily from Facebook and Twitter.

So the question is: Why do they do that? Well, they do it because of things like this that happened after I introduced the Vaccines Act. Here are some overt threats:

"Keep shoving this vaccine monitor down people's throats and expect riots.''

"Be careful. You will answer for this tyranny one

day.''

"She needs to just disappear. Can we vote her out of office? I am enraged over these poison pushers.''

"We have weapons and are trained to fight off possible forced vaccinations. I will die protecting my family.''

And then there is just the misinformation.

"It says 'safe and effective' many times, yet no vaccine has been studied in a double-blind study.'' False.

"Who is going to take this vaccine? I heard rumors that it changes a person's DNA.'' False.

"You do not give'' -- excuse my language -- "You do not give a shit about the health and welfare of our children. This horrid vaccine has already killed 600 people. You are deplorable.'' And of course that again is false.

So while the overt threats are unsettling, particularly after January 6, I think about this whole ecosystem, your ecosystem, that directs a hostile sliver of society, en masse, to my official Facebook page. And these are not my constituents. In fact, most came from two specific groups that directed their members to my page.

Mr. Zuckerberg, I have some questions for you. I know you understand these issues are important, and sometimes misinformation can be very hard to spot. Would you agree?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I agree with both of those. This is important and the enforcement processes can

be difficult.

*Ms. Schrier. Thank you. And I heard your answer earlier to Representative Upton's question, that there are 35,000 people doing content review of posts that have been flagged by users and AI. Can you tell me what "content review'' means and how many of those 35,000 are dedicated to topics regarding health?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, yes. What the people are doing overall is content gets flagged, either by the AI systems or by another person in the community. And if the AI can't by itself determine that something either violates or doesn't, then it gets flagged for human review and human judgment. And the 35,000 people go through all those different queues, focused on all the different kinds of harms that we have discussed today.

I don't have the number off the top of my head about how many of them are focused on vaccine misinformation. But as you know, we have a policy that doesn't allow vaccine misinformation, and we work with the WHO and CDC to take down false claims around COVID, and the vaccines around that, that that could cause harm.

*Ms. Schrier. That is where it really gets tricky, because you have to have experts and healthcare professionals who really understand. Are your people trained in healthcare to really even be able to discern what is real, what is fake,

and what to take down?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, the people who set the policies either are experts in these areas or engage in a consultative process where they talk to a lot of these different folks. In this case, we largely defer to the CDC and WHO on which claims they think are going to be harmful. And then we try to break that down into kind of very simple protocols that the 35,000 people can follow and that we can build into AI systems to go find as much of that content proactively as possible without requiring all those people to be medical experts.

*Ms. Schrier. So with my short time remaining, I would love to jump to that part about the CDC because I want to turn my attention to the COVID resource center that you describe as a central part of your efforts to fight misinformation, directed over 2 billion people to the COVID-19 information center.

But on the information page, almost all of the content links to additional Facebook pages. It looks to me like an extension of Facebook's walled garden that just keeps users on the site instead of leading directly to authoritative, trusted sources like the CDC.

So knowing that your platform is a large source of misinformation, did you consider just referring people directly to sites like the CDC rather than keeping them

within your platform?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congresswoman, I think we have considered both, and I think we have done both in different cases. The team is very focused on building this in the way that is going to be most effective at getting people to actually see the content, and I believe that they healthcare concluded that showing content from people within a person's community that they are going to trust on the service is one of the most effective things that we can do.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentlelady's time is expired.

*Ms. Schrier. Thank you. I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. The chair now recognizes Mr. Crenshaw for five minutes.

*Mr. Crenshaw. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here. It has been a long one.

I have been on some social media longer than anyone in Congress, I think; I was one of the first schools to have Facebook back in 2004. And it seemed to me that the goal of social media was simply to connect people.

Now, the reason we are here today is because, over time, the role of social media has expanded in an extraordinary way. Your power to sway opinions and control narratives is far greater than the U.S. Government's power ever has been.

So I noticed a trend today. There is a growing desire from many of my colleagues to make you the arbiters of truth.

See, they know you have this power and they want to direct that power for their own political gain. Mr. Zuckerberg, since Facebook was my first love, I am going to direct questions at you. And this isn't a trick question, I promise.

Do you believe in the spirit of the First Amendment -- free speech, robust debate, basically liberal values?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Yes, absolutely.

*Mr. Crenshaw. See, my colleagues can't infringe on the First Amendment. The American people in their speech are protected from government, as they should be. My colleagues, this administration, they can't silence pump they disagree with no matter how much they want to.

But I do think they want to. Just in this hearing, I have heard Democrats complain about misinformation, by which they clearly mean political speech they disagree with. They have complained today that Prager University content is still up. I have heard them accuse conservative veterans of being tinfoil hat-wearing extremists, and that opinions on climate change that they disagree with should be taken down.

This is quite different from the Republican complaint that illegal content needs to be addressed. There is a growing number of people in this country that don't believe in the liberal values of free speech and free debate. I promise you, the death of the First Amendment will come when

the culture no longer believes in it. But that happens and it becomes okay to jail or investigate citizens for speech, like has happened in Canada and throughout Europe. Their culture turned against free speech.

You all sitting here today as witnesses are part of the culture. You can stand up for the spirit of open debate and free speech, or you can be the enemy of it. Your stance is important because it is clear that many want to weaponize your platforms to get you to do their bidding for them.

Mr. Zuckerberg, do you think it is your place to be the judge of what is true when it comes to political opinions?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, no. I don't believe that we should be the arbiter of truth.

*Mr. Crenshaw. Thank you. And look. I promise you this: As long as you resist these increasing calls from politicians to do their political bidding for them, I will have your back. When you don't, you become an enemy of liberty and longstanding American tradition.

You might all agree in principle with what I just said -- Mr. Zuckerberg, you clearly do, and I appreciate it; I have a feeling the others would answer it as well, I just don't have time to ask everybody -- but the fact remains that community standards on social media platforms are perceived to be applied unequally and with blatant bias.

Mr. Dorsey, in just one example, I saw a video from

Project Veritas that was taken down because they confronted a Facebook executive on his front lawn. But here is the thing: I can show you a video of CNN doing the exact same thing to an old woman who was a Trump supporter in her front yard. I have looked at both videos. It is an apples to apples comparison. CNN remains up; Project Veritas was taken down.

I will give you a chance to respond to that. I have a feeling you are going to tell me you have to look into it.

*Mr. Dorsey. I don't have an understanding of the case, but I would imagine, if we were to take a video like that down, it would be due to a doxxing concern, private address.

*Mr. Crenshaw. The address was blurred out. Look, you don't have it and you don't have the case in front of you. I get that. The point is that there are countless examples like this. I just found that one today. But there are countless examples like this.

So even if we agree in principle on everything I just went over, you guys have lost trust. And you have lost trust because this bias is seeping through. And we need more transparency. We need a better appeals process, more equitable application of your community guidelines, because we have to root out political bias in these platforms.

I think -- and I have talked with a lot of you offline or at least your staff, and I think there is some agreement there. And I haven't heard, in this hearing, anybody ask you

what you're doing to achieve these goals. So I will allow you to do that now. Maybe, Mr. Zuckerberg, we will start with you.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Sorry. To achieve which goals?

*Mr. Dorsey. More transparency, more feeling that -- better appeals process for content taken down, more equitable application of community guidelines.

*Mr. Zuckerberg. So for transparency, we issue quarterly community standards enforcement reports on what prevalence of harmful content of each category, from terrorism to incitement of violence to child exploitation, all the things that we have talked about, how much of it there is and how effective we are at finding that, and states around that.

For appeals, the biggest thing that we have done is set up this independent oversight board, which is staffed with people who all have a strong commitment to free expression, for whom people in our community can ultimately appeal to them and that group will make a binding decision, including overturning several of the things that we have taken down and telling us that we have to put them back up, and then we respect that.

*Mr. Doyle. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes --

*Mr. Crenshaw. I yield back seconds.

*Mr. Doyle. -- last but not least, my fellow Pennsylvanian, Mr. Joyce. You are recognized for five minutes.

*Mr. Joyce. Thank you for yielding. And thank you, Mr. Chairman and the ranking members, for convening this hearing. I thank you all. It has been a long day.

But this is an incredibly important day. We have heard consistently during this hearing about alarming accounts of content policing, censorship, and even permanent de-platforming of individuals. I have also been concerned about the lack of transparency and consistency in Facebook's application, of Facebook's own standards.

As you mentioned, I am a representative from Pennsylvania, and in my district, Facebook shut down the personal pages of Walt Tuchalski and Charlotte Shaffer, as well as the Adams County Republican Committee Facebook page that they administered in historic Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. And this all occurred without warning.

Since the pages were taken down in December, these Pennsylvania haven't received an acceptable answer from Facebook about why they were banned, nor have they been given the opportunity to appeal this decision.

Mr. Zuckerberg, could you please explain how something like this could happen?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I am not familiar with

those specific details. But in general, I agree that building out a better appeals process and better and more transparent communication to people about why specific decisions were made is one of the most important things that we need to do next. And that is one of the big things on our roadmap for this year and next year, and I hope we can dramatically improve those experiences.

*Mr. Joyce. Mr. Zuckerberg, may I get from you a commitment that a more concise and transparent appeals process will be developed?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, yes. We are working on more transparent communication to people and more of an appeals process as part of our product now, like I just said.

*Mr. Joyce. And will you commit to getting my constituents answers as to why they were banned?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I can certainly have my team follow up with them and make sure that we can do that.

*Mr. Joyce. Thank you for that.

I am also concerned by potential partisan bias in Facebook's enforcement of its content policies. Shut down the Adams County Republican Committee Facebook page strikes me as an infringement on speech, and that is normally protected in the public domain.

Mr. Zuckerberg, does Facebook maintain data on how many Democrat and Republican county committee pages that you have

banned from your platform?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. No, Congressman, we don't. We don't generally keep any data on whether the people who use our platform are Democrats or Republicans. So it is hard for us --

*Mr. Joyce. Then let me -- time is running short here, and it is a long day. But Mr. Zuckerberg, you say you have not maintained that data. Would you consider gathering such data to verify that there is no political bias in your enforcement algorithms?

*Mr. Zuckerberg. Congressman, I am not sure that that is a great idea. I don't know that most people would want us to collect data on whether they are a Democrat or a Republican and have that be a part of our overall system.

*Mr. Joyce. I think there is a huge disparity, as I represent Pennsylvania. And I think that that data would be appreciated if shared with us in a fair manner.

My next question is to Mr. Dorsey. Does Twitter maintain data on the political affiliations of accounts that you block?

*Mr. Dorsey. No.

*Mr. Joyce. Have you determined that any political is necessary for your enforcement?

*Mr. Dorsey. I'm not sure what you mean, but no.

*Mr. Joyce. I think that these discussions today are so

important. I think that you all recognize that the platforms that you represent have developed an incredible ability for Americans to connect and contact. But this free speech that we hold so dear to us must be maintained.

Again, I thank the chairman, I thank the ranking member for bringing us together and allowing us to present what I feel are sincere concerns to you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield.

*Mr. Doyle. I thank the gentleman. The gentleman yields back.

Everyone who wanted to ask a question has asked one. And I want to thank all of you for your patience today. I request unanimous consent to enter the following records testimony and other information into the record:

A letter from Asian Americans advancing justice.

A letter from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

A letter from New Americas Open Technology Institute.

A letter from New York Small Pharma, Limited.

A statement from the Alphabet Workers Union.

Letters from National Blackjacks Justice Coalition.

A letter from Sikhs for Justice.

A letter from State AGs.

A letter from the Computer and Communications Industry Association.

A letter from AVAAZ.

Opening statement from Anna Eshoo.

A blog from Neil Fried of DigitalFrontiers Advocacy.

A letter from the music community.

A letter from the Disinfo Defense League.

A letter from Consumer Reports.

A report from the Center for Countering Digital Hate called "The Disinformation Dozen.''

A letter from the Coalition for a Secure and Transparent Internet.

A letter from the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

A letter from Gun Violence Survivors.

Faces of tech-harmed Congress.

Letter to YouTube from Rep. Eshoo.

Letter to Facebook from Rep. Eshoo.

Letter to Twitter from Rep. Eshoo.

A longitudinal analysis of YouTube's promotion of conspiracy videos.

A letter from the Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies.

A CCIA statement.

A comment by Donovan, et al. from the Technology and Social Change team.

[redacted]

[redacted]

A response letter from Twitter to Rep. Rodgers.

A response letter from Google to Rep. Rogers.

A response letter from Facebook to Rep. Rodgers.

An article from Engadget.

A letter regarding Spanish Language Misinformation.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control: "The National Survey on Drug Use and Health.''

And Mercado, Holland, Leemis, Stone, and Wang regarding Teen Mental Health.

A report from the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Without objection, so ordered.

[The information listed above follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********

*Mr. Doyle. I want to thank our witnesses today for appearing. We appreciate it. We appreciate your patience while you answered these questions from all members. I hope you can take away from this hearing how serious we are on both side of the aisle to see many of these issues that trouble Americans addressed. But thank you for being here today.

I want to remind all members that pursuant to Committee Rules, they have 10 business days to submit additional questions for the record to be answered by the witnesses who have appeared. And I would ask each witness to respond promptly to any questions that you may receive.

At this time, this hearing is adjourned.

*Ms. Schakowsky. Mr. Chairman?

*Mr. Doyle. Yes?

*Ms. Schakowsky. Jane Schakowsky here.

*Mr. Doyle. Yes. You are recognized.

*Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you. As chair of the Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee, I just want to say that I was glad to be really a co-chair of this. I think you did a great job, Mike, in making this happen. It is 5 and a half hours. I want to thank the witnesses for doing your best to answer the questions, or at least being willing to be here to hear all the questions. You can see there is a lot of concern.

We want to work with you and we want to work with each other in order to move ahead. AS I said at the very beginning, if you take one thing away from this hearing today, is that these democratically elected members are ready to act, are ready to legislate, are ready to regulate in your arena. And we are hoping that we can work with you as well.

So thank you, Mike, and I yield back.

*Mr. Doyle. Thank you, Jan. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:32 p.m., the subcommittees were adjourned.]