

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2023

Chairwoman Amy Klobuchar
Committee on Rules and Administration
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20530

Ranking Member Deb Fischer
Committee on Rules and Administration
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20530

Chairman Bryan Steil
Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Joseph Morelle
Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Klobuchar, Ranking Member Fischer, Chairman Steil, and Ranking Member Morelle,

We write to you today regarding recent revelations from the House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing titled: “TikTok: How Congress Can Safeguard American Data Privacy and Protect Children from Online Harms.” It is clear from the testimony and comments from TikTok CEO, Shou Zi Chew, that all members of Congress must lead by example and immediately stop using the platform for official communications. As such, we urge you to amend the House and Senate rules to bar members of Congress from continued use of TikTok and take any other appropriate measures to mitigate the risks of this de-facto, spyware app.

Even after the March 23, 2023, hearing, in which it became blatantly clear to the public that the China-based app is mining data and potentially spying on American citizens, members of Congress continue to utilize the app to communicate with their constituents. Some members of Congress who regularly use the app have minimized the security threat to our nation, and their defense is not compelling, considering there are several popular social media apps that are not at the same risk for the potential transfer of sensitive, private information to an adversarial foreign government.

In March 2020, the Senate’s Chief Information Officer issued a Cybersecurity advisory warning on the data vulnerabilities of TikTok.^[1] Likewise, the House Chief Administrative Officer warned members of Congress almost a year ago that TikTok is of high-risk to users.^[2] It is troublesome that some members continue to disregard these clear warnings and are even encouraging their constituents to use TikTok to interface with their elected representatives – especially since some of these users are minors. We feel this situation warrants further action to protect the privacy of both sensitive congressional information and the personal information of our constituents. To that end, we urge you to enact a change to the Senate and House rules to ban members of Congress from using TikTok for official use.

Sincerely,

^[1] Cybersecurity Advisory, TikTok Application, March 20, 2020. Available at: https://webster-media.senate.gov/media/filer_public/ed/5a/ed5a84b4-c05a-4b71-8a60-a929dc911107/2020-03-20_cybersecurity_advisory_-_tiktok_application.pdf

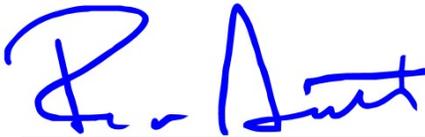
^[2] <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000182-8757-d843-a79a-c77f59590000>



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress



Troy Balderson
Member of Congress



Anna Paulina Luna
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



Randy K. Weber, Sr.
Member of Congress



Michael Guest
Member of Congress



Greg Pence
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress



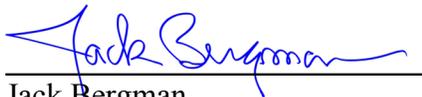
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Max L. Miller
Member of Congress



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Jack Bergman
Member of Congress