

United States Senate

March 22, 2021

Mark Zuckerberg
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Facebook, Inc.
1601 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025

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

Evan Spiegel
Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Snap, Inc.
2772 Donald Douglas Loop North
Santa Monica, CA 90405

Sundar Pichai
Chief Executive Officer
Alphabet Inc.
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Chief Executive Officer:

Over the last 15 years, social media has become an integral part of the lives of many Americans. An entire generation is now growing up on social media, raising concerns among parents about some of the impacts this may cause, particularly among teenagers. While some aspects of social media platforms have proved useful for individuals and families to connect, especially during this pandemic, the platforms' activities have raised serious concerns, including the ongoing censorship of conservatives. Your companies have refused to apply your own rules fairly across the board, and we have seen the silencing of those you disagree with. It is shameful and something we should all be concerned about. I will always work to protect Americans' ability to speak freely.

I am also concerned about the potential harmful impact on the next generation, particularly following reports¹ that Facebook is working on a version of its Instagram app for kids under 13. The American people deserve to understand the risks associated with the repeated and long-term use of social media platforms, especially among children and young adults.

A 2018 Pew Research survey found that nearly all U.S. teens ages 13-17 have access to a smartphone and almost half of teens are online "almost constantly."² No generation in American history has been so connected or had so much information at

¹ <https://apnews.com/article/lifestyle-media-9086b06eacea5f64db17042cb296e36a>

² <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>

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their fingertips. Coinciding with this rise in social media usage, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has noted that the suicide rate among U.S. teenagers is significantly and tragically rising. While correlation does not always indicate causation, I do believe this alarming statistic must be urgently investigated.


The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on all Americans, but young adults have had their lives drastically altered. With school closures and more time indoors, teens have been spending even more time on the internet and on social media. Therefore, I request information on the following:

- What actions, if any, are you taking to study the use of your platform by children or teenagers?
- Does your platform encourage extended use among children or teenagers?
- Are you aware of any harmful effects of extended use of your platform? If so, have you communicated these findings to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, Federal Communications Commission, or any relevant state authorities?
- What actions, if any, do you take to warn parents about the potential for harmful impacts of prolonged use of your platform?
- What steps are you taking to mitigate potentially harmful effects of long-term use of your platform by teenagers?

While Congress passed the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (15 U.S.C. §§ 6501–6506) to protect children using the internet, it does not address the health impacts of prolonged social media use. I worry that the potential impacts of long-term social media use by children and teens has not received the attention it deserves.

I look forward to your response and working together to protect American families.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
United States Senator