

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 21, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to highlight an important opportunity for the 2022 G7 Leadership Summit regarding international collaboration on digital services accountability, specifically measures to address disinformation, extremism, hate, and harassment.

The dangers of an unhealthy information environment are well established and cannot be overstated. Social media accounts linked to the Chinese government and troll farms are spreading Vladimir Putin’s propaganda about Ukraine.¹ Disinformation, conspiracy theories, and blatantly mis-captioned videos tied to U.S. politics are spreading throughout Latin America and through Spanish speaking communities here in the U.S.² Our nation continues to investigate the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capitol, including seeking a better understanding of the ways social media platforms amplified disinformation about the 2020 Presidential Election.³ The spread of mis and disinformation is impacting the next generation’s ability to recognize quality information.⁴ Furthermore, leading companies are currently incentivized to promote engaging content to maximize profits.

American allies are stepping up to address these dangers to their democracies. In February 2021, *Japan’s Improving Transparency and Fairness of Digital Platforms Act* went into force.⁵ In July 2021, Canada received consultation on a regulatory framework for online safety.⁶ In April 2022, European Union negotiators reached a political agreement on the final text for the *Digital Services Act*.⁷ In March 2022, the United Kingdom introduced the *Online Safety Act*.⁸ These

¹[Elizabeth Dwoskin, “China is Russia’s most powerful weapon for information warfare,” *The Washington Post*, April 8, 2022](#) see also [Craig Silverman and Jeff Kao, “Infamous Russian Troll Farm Appears to Be Source of Anti-Ukraine Propaganda,” *ProPublica*, March 11, 2022](#)

² [The Associated Press, “Inside the ‘big wave’ of misinformation targeted at Latino,” *NBC News*, November 29, 2022](#)

³ [“Select Committee Subpoenas Social Media Companies for Records Related to January 6th Attack,” *Select Committee Press Release*, January 13, 2022](#)

⁴ [“Schoolkids Are Falling Victim to Disinformation and Conspiracy Fantasies,” *Scientific American*, February 1, 2022](#)

⁵ [“Key Points of the Act on Improving Transparency and Fairness of Digital Platforms \(TFDPA\),” *Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry \(METI\)*, April 16, 2021](#)

⁶ [“The Government’s commitment to address online safety,” *The Government of Canada*, Last Modified June 3, 2022](#)

⁷ [“The Digital Services Act package,” *The European Commission*](#)

⁸ [“Online Safety Bill: Factsheet,” *United Kingdom Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport*](#)

laws include key transparency and reporting requirements that, if structured to complement democratic principles like free speech, could support a safer internet. Such provisions include risk assessments, independent audits of risk mitigation processes and design features, protocols and frameworks for researcher access to data, transparency reports, digital advertisement libraries, codes of conduct, and recommender system transparency.

If the United States does not join these social media transparency efforts on an international level, it risks the formation and enforcement of new rules, standards, and best practices without American input. True, Congress continues to negotiate a range of policy proposals from both sides of the aisle that include these concepts.⁹ However, given the international nature of most online platforms, there is a benefit to structuring these reporting requirements and practices in a modular way – creating consistent standards and frameworks that serve every democratic nation’s goals while allowing and understanding that each country may have some additional requirements or approaches to enforcement.

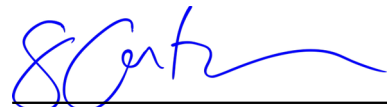
In short, the United States should ensure it has a seat at the table as these new proposals are negotiated. We ask that the Administration use G7 meetings to promote American interests in these negotiations. Future G7 discussions should include how the reporting requirements and practices described above may be structured collaboratively to encourage better governance and spur innovation. Achieving a healthy information environment is critical for fostering connections, promoting ideas, holding fair elections, and keeping American and all G7 democracies secure.

cc. Secretary Blinken

Sincerely,



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress

⁹ [not exhaustive] [H.R.6796 - Digital Services Oversight and Safety Act of 2022, 117th Congress](#) see also [H.R.3451 - Social Media DATA Act, 117th Congress](#) see also [H.R.6796 - Digital Services Oversight and Safety Act of 2022, 117th Congress](#) see also [S.797 - PACT ACT, 117th Congress](#) see also [S. 3663 – The Kids Online Safety Act of 2022, 117th Congress](#)

David N. Cicilline

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress