



— CONGRESSWOMAN —  
**LORI TRAHAN**  
PROUDLY REPRESENTING  MASSACHUSETTS' 3RD DISTRICT

## **What They're Saying: The Social Media DATA Act of 2021**

### **Rishi Bharwani, Director of Partnerships, Accountable Tech:**

“The opacity of adtech has allowed social media giants like Facebook and Google-owned YouTube to rake in record profits while allowing discrimination and fraud to run rampant on their platforms. The same corporations that stand to make billions of dollars from the status quo should not be in charge of regulating themselves. The Social Media DATA Act provides the transparency that’s needed by allowing academic researchers, civil rights advocates, and privacy experts access to the data they need to protect consumers and small businesses alike.”

### **Sara Collins, Policy Counsel, Public Knowledge:**

“Social Media DATA Act will provide much-needed clarity on the intricacies of the advertising networks of major platforms, all while ensuring protections for users and their data through a future FTC rulemaking. Access to this information will be under FTC oversight to ensure that data is used for its intended purpose, research. Allowing research of this kind will provide a better understanding of both the efficacy of targeted advertising and its effects on users, which should help policymakers make strong consumer-centered policies in areas like competition and privacy.”

### **Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and National Director, The Anti-Defamation League:**

“Social media is fueled by a business model that puts profit over people. In order to understand and remedy the harmful consequences of this model, we need - but currently lack - meaningful transparency requirements that permit examination of advertising practices, including how they target users and what paid content is amplified. By requiring platforms to provide increased access to academic researchers and the FTC, this bill will help us better analyze the problems with, and repair, our broken internet.”

### **Josh Golin, Executive Director, Campaign for Commercial Free Childhood:**

“The Social Media DATA Act would shine a light on the opaque and powerful digital advertising ecosystem that has a profound impact on young people’s wellbeing and development. We applaud Rep. Trahan for introducing this important and much-needed legislation.”

**James P. Steyer, CEO, Common Sense:**

“The problem with microtargeted ads is that no one knows how or whether they even work, yet companies have built a billion-dollar business model based on them, raising questions for families and for our country about how these ads harm consumers. Representative Trahan's Social Media DATA Act will crack open this advertising black box, and help independent researchers unravel how microtargeted ads can deny opportunities to our communities, pollute our political discourse, and target us with hate and harassment. Importantly, it also highlights the need for advertising regulators like the Federal Trade Commission to get more support and spend more resources cleaning up the mess that is online advertising today. We applaud Rep. Trahan for shining a light on yet another online advertising issue that has yet to be studied and addressed.”

**Tracy Rosenberg, Executive Director, Media Alliance:**

“The Social Media Data Act would ensure that qualified academic researchers can study social media advertising and its impacts with unimpeded access to the data they need. Digital advertising uses the information social media platforms collect about us to expose us to individualized targeted advertising for profit. Such advertising can be based on our preferences, associations, location, the state of our health, religion, race or age, When profit-driven imperatives control much of our social media feeds, we see different content based on who we are. This can result in discriminatory outcomes, increased polarization, the spread of misinformation, and the use of our most personal characteristics to manipulate our perceptions of the world. This should not go on in a black box where we cannot see under the hood to measure what is happening to us. With transparent access to social media advertising metrics, we can develop best practices to meaningfully study impact and develop policy to mitigate harm and protect personal privacy and vulnerable populations subject to discrimination. Social media has changed the world, in both positive and negative ways, and we should be able to reap the benefits without sacrificing our civil and human rights, if not the health of democracy itself. The Social Media Data Act would help to find that balance.”

**Katharina Kopp, Deputy Director, Center for Digital Democracy:**

“Social media platforms require regulatory safeguards that include ensuring transparency in how they use information. The Center for Digital Democracy supports Rep. Trahan’s the Social Media Data Act, which will bring some much-needed sunlight into the purposeful opaque processes of how these companies operate their data driven digital marketing operations. This bill is an important first step in reining in the unchecked power of the social media industry.”

**Ann M. Ravel, Former Chair of the Federal Election Commission and Policy Director, Decode Democracy:**

“As social media has become a more powerful tool to influence politics, policy, and public opinion, regulations to ensure transparency have failed to keep up. As a result, social media platforms have become weaponized as tools to deceive, spread disinformation, and incite violence,” said. “By requiring platforms to maintain libraries of ads and directing the FTC to provide guidance about the access researchers should have to social media data, the Social Media DATA Act would mark a significant increase in transparency to help us diagnose and fix problems while holding the platforms accountable.”

**Dr. Hany Farid, Professor at the University of California, Berkley:**

“As we wrestle with complex issues at the intersection of technology and society, it has never been more important to ensure that researchers have more, consistent, and secure access to what has -- for too long -- been inaccessible data. The Social Media DATA Act is an important step to achieving this goal.”