

**Opening Statement Prepared for House Energy and  
Commerce Committee Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
“Legislation to Protect Americans from the National Security  
Threats Posed by Foreign Adversary Controlled  
Applications”  
March 7, 2024**

**CHAIR: I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for an opening statement.**

**INTRO**

The Chinese Communist Party pose the greatest national security threat to the United States of our time.

With applications like TikTok, these countries are able to target, surveil, and manipulate Americans.

Protecting American’s data and addressing the serious national security threat posed by the CCP have been my top priorities all Congress.

This Committee and others have been working diligently in a bi-partisan manner to deliver solutions to address these critical issues. Today, we take action.

One year ago this month, the CEO of TikTok testified before this committee to answer for the threat his company poses to America’s national security.

During the hearing, he was asked several times if ByteDance uses information it collects from TikTok users to spy on Americans.

His response was, and I quote, “I wouldn’t describe it as spying.”

TikTok has repeatedly been caught lying about its connection to ByteDance...

...as well as the level of access the CCP has to our data, which they are using to weaponize our freedoms against us.

That ends now.

## **SURVEILLING AMERICANS**

TikTok’s access to 170 million American users makes it a valuable propaganda tool for the CCP to exploit and use for nefarious purposes.

Through this access, the app is able to collect nearly every data point imaginable, from people’s location, to what they search on their devices, who they are connecting with, and other forms of sensitive information.

The app’s trackers are embedded in sites across the web...

...so even if someone has never been on TikTok, their personal information is at risk of being collected and abused.

TikTok’s parent company, ByteDance, is currently under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice for surveilling American journalists...

That’s just one example—it gets much worse.

While TikTok may be the most well-known application subject to the CCP, it is certainly not the only one—others, like Lemon8 and

Capcut, are also subject to the CCP's influence through ByteDance.

## **FOREIGN ADVERSARY-CONTROLLED APPS**

That is why today, we are discussing legislation that will prevent apps controlled by foreign adversaries from targeting, surveilling, and manipulating the American people.

I commend members of the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, in particular Chair Mike Gallagher and Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi...

...for their partnership on this legislation to address the immediate threat that Bytedance ownership of TikTok poses, and I look forward to quickly advancing this bill to the full House.

This is a targeted approach to prohibit access to an application owned by a foreign adversary that poses a clear threat to U.S. national security.

Additionally, we will be discussing legislation to prevent data brokers from sharing Americans' sensitive information with foreign adversaries and the companies they control.

We know that data brokers sell our sensitive information to the highest bidder.

I'm appreciative of Ranking Member Pallone bringing this legislation forward, so that we may establish clear prohibitions on the sale of location and health information to our adversaries.

This is an important step in our continued efforts to establish comprehensive data privacy in order to effectively crack down on abuses of our personal information.

## **CONCLUSION**

Companies controlled by a foreign adversary, like the CCP, will never embrace American values...

...virtues of our society and culture like freedom of speech, human rights, the rule of law, a free press, and others.

Our adversaries choose to rule through fear and control.

If given the choice, they will always choose the path for more control, more surveillance, and more manipulation.

Apps like TikTok, Lemon8, and Capcut are “spying-by-design”.... they have to—it is required by law in China.

This foreign interference and manipulation is not welcome here.

The threats posed by TikTok are real, which is why today we will be hearing from the national intelligence community about the threats and how this legislation will neutralize them.

I look forward to our discussion today and I yield to my colleague, Ranking Member Frank Pallone.