

Opening Statement Prepared for House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers

Full Committee Markup

March 7, 2024

INTRO

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to today's markup of two important pieces of legislation.

Earlier today, we heard from members of the intelligence community about the dangers posed by applications, like TikTok, that are controlled by foreign adversaries... and who are determined to exploit and weaponize Americans' data.

We also witnessed firsthand... in real time... how the Chinese Communist Party can weaponize platforms like TikTok to manipulate the American people.

This morning, prior to our hearing, TikTok used its influence and power to force users to contact their representatives if they wanted to continue using TikTok.

This is just a small taste of how the CCP weaponizes applications it controls to manipulate tens of millions of people to further its agenda.

These applications present a clear national security threat to the United States... and necessitate the decisive action we will take today.

First, we will consider H.R. 7521, the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act...

... which will prohibit applications that are controlled by our foreign adversaries and pose a clear national security risk if control is not divested.

We will also consider H.R. 7520, the Protecting Americans' Data from Foreign Adversaries Act of 2024, led by Ranking Member Frank Pallone...

... which will prevent data brokers from sharing Americans' sensitive information with foreign adversaries.

FOREIGN ADVERSARY CONTROLLED APPS

Foreign adversaries, like the Chinese Communist Party, pose the greatest national security threat of our time.

Our adversaries are actively working to undermine America's global leadership.

At its core, H.R. 7521 is about banning foreign adversaries, such as China, from targeting... surveilling... and manipulating the American people through apps like TikTok.

The bill takes a two-pronged approach...

First, it requires Bytedance to divest TikTok and other applications it controls within 180 days after enactment of the bill... or those apps will be prohibited in the United States.

Second, this bill creates a *narrow* process to allow the Executive Branch to prohibit access to an application that is owned by a foreign adversary if it poses a threat to national security.

This is NOT a blank check for the Biden administration, or future administrations, to ban whatever apps they want.

The Executive agencies... including the national security agencies and the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS)... must agree that a foreign adversary-controlled application poses a threat to national security.

The threat to national security must be well documented... the public must be notified... and the information must be presented to Congress...

...at which point the President may make a determination that a foreign adversary-controlled application must be divested or face prohibition in the United States.

This prohibition can only be applied to applications controlled by a “foreign adversary,” which the bill defines as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

DIVESTMENT

In all of these cases, there is an option for divestment to occur.

If Bytedance divests TikTok... meaning the Chinese Communist Party is no longer controlling the application...TikTok can continue to operate in the United States.

CCP-controlled TikTok has claimed this bill is an “outright ban.”

It is not.

We have given TikTok a clear choice...

...Divest from your parent company, which is beholden to the Chinese Communist Party, and remain operational in the United States... or side with the Chinese Communist Party and face a ban.

The choice is theirs.

DATA BROKERS:

Today we will also be considering H.R. 7520, the Protecting Americans’ Data from Foreign Adversaries Act of 2024.

Data brokers collect a stunning amount of sensitive information and data on Americans—from people’s physical and mental health, to when and where they’re traveling.

Once collected, this sensitive information is sold to the highest bidder... including foreign adversaries, like China.

I’m appreciative of Ranking Member Pallone’s leadership on this legislation that will prevent data brokers from sharing Americans’ sensitive information with foreign adversaries and the companies they control.

This is an important complement to our continued efforts to establish a comprehensive data privacy standard in order to effectively crack down on abuses of Americans’ personal information.

AMERICAN VALUES:

Today we will take the first step in creating long overdue laws...

...to protect Americans from the threat posed by apps controlled by our adversaries...

...and to send a very clear message that the U.S. will always stand up for our values and freedom.

We will NOT allow for the continued targeting...surveilling... and manipulation of Americans through foreign adversary-controlled applications.

I’m thankful to everyone who has worked in a bipartisan manner to get us here today, including Ranking Member Pallone and China Select Committee on the CCP Chair Mike Gallagher and Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi.

I look forward to today’s markup and I yield back.