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MAINSTREAMING EXTREMISM:

SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN RADICALIZING AMERICA

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce,

Committee on Energy and Commerce,

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 11:00 a.m., via Webex, Hon. Jan Schakowsky [chairwoman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Schakowsky, Castor, Veasey, Kelly, O'Halleran, Lujan, Cardenas, Blunt Rochester, Soto, Rush, Matsui, McNerney, Dingell, Pallone (ex officio), Rodgers, Latta, Bucshon, Hudson, Carter, Gianforte, and Walden (ex officio).

Staff Present: Billy Benjamin, Systems Administrator; Jeff Carroll, Staff Director; Lisa Goldman, Senior Counsel; Daniel Greene, Professional Staff Member; Perry Hamilton, Deputy Chief Clerk; Alex Hoenhn-Saric, Chief Counsel, Communications and Consumer

Protection; Joe Orlando, Policy Analyst; Kaitlyn Peel, Digital Director; Tim Robinson, Chief Counsel; Chloe Rodriguez, Deputy Chief Clerk; Sydney Terry, Policy Coordinator; Anna Yu, Professional Staff Member; Mike Bloomquist, Minority Staff Director; Tiffany Haverly, Minority Communications Director; Bijan Koochmaraie, Minority Deputy Chief Counsel, CPAC, Director of Coalitions; Tim Kurth, Minority Chief Counsel, CPAC; Ryan Long, Minority Deputy Staff Director; Brannon Rains, Minority Policy Analyst; and Callie Strock, Minority Press Secretary.

Ms. Schakowsky. The Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce will come to order, and today we will be holding a hearing entitled "Mainstreaming Extremism: Social Media's Role in Radicalizing America."

And due to the COVID-19 public health emergency -- am I on -- okay -- emergency, today's hearing is being held remotely. All members and witnesses will be participating via video, via video conference. As part of our hearing, microphones will be set on mute for the purpose of eliminating inadvertent background noise, which I am often guilty of.

Members and witnesses, you will need to unmute your microphone each time that you wish to speak. Additionally, members will need to be visible on the screen in order to be recognized. If we don't see you, if you are not there, then you will not be able to be called upon.

Documents for the record can be sent to Chloe Rodriguez at the email address that we have provided to staff. All documents will be entered into the record at the conclusion of the hearing.

So now member opening statements will be held, and I will recognize myself for 5 minutes.

So good morning, and I want to thank everybody for joining us today for a virtual hearing on "Social Media's Role in Spreading Extremism." Throughout our Nation's history, we have seen extremism undermine public faith in our institutions, include -- incite violence, sow division, and spread hate speech. Whether it be the Ku Klux Klan or neo-Nazis or bullying vulnerable individuals, these attacks are not new to Americans. But what is different today is the way that social media algorithms can magnify hate speech. Despite the many conveniences and benefits for communication, over time social media's dark side has grown and divided Americans at a time when we

really need to pull together.

As Big Tech developed the online ecosystem and monetized its functions to their enormous benefit, these companies have done little really to protect Americans from the dangers that are lurking in the dark corners. Driven by profit and power and in the face of obvious harm, these mega companies successfully have convinced governments all over the world to essentially leave them alone, lest we disturb the delicate garden that they are tending.

Big Tech has helped divide nations and has stoked genocide in others, in our Nation and stoked genocide. Consider Myanmar where we saw mass murder of the Rohingya people, and these companies have profited at every turn.

Consider the QAnon conspiracy theory that has thrived online for years now. Q followers believe that the entire world is controlled by a secret cabal of child abusers who will eventually drink the blood of victims. The FBI has linked the group to domestic terror and considers it a continuing terrorism threat.

I would like to commend our colleagues, Adam Kinzinger, Tom Malinowski, and Denver Riggleman for confronting this threat head on.

There is no doubt that controversy and extremism drives engagement and, therefore, profit. Algorithms that amplify extremism, extremist views also amplify profit for these platforms. A 9/11 conspiracy video has been seen 22 million times on Facebook in the last week. Each view keeps eyeballs on the platform and dollars rolling in. Nowhere has Facebook been more negligent than in its oversight of its group function. Facebook -- Facebook groups promoting misogyny have grown by 10 percent, and anti-LGBT groups have grown by 22 percent, and groups promoting anti-Semitism have grown by 27 percent in the last week.

In a recent interview with an engineer at Facebook, he said that the

group-recommendation algorithm is, quote, the scariest feature of the platform, the darkest manifestation. And then he went on further to say a user entering one of the groups and Facebook essentially pigeonholes them into a lifestyle they can never really get out of, unquote.

I wanted to let you know next week I will be circulating a draft legislative proposal that aims to fundamentally alter these companies' business models and give consumers and regulators the recourse when these companies fail in their basic commitments, in their stated basic commitments to consumers. And I certainly hope all of you will take a close look at that.

I want to, at this point, thank the witnesses for their testimony and recognize for 5 minutes the ranking member, Cathy Rodgers, and you have 5 minutes. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Schakowsky follows:]

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Mrs. Rodgers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to our hearing focused on social media.

As with any disruptive technology, the internet certainly has its faults, especially when platforms are used to cause real harm, especially if companies are not fulfilling their responsibilities.

However, I hope we all recognize how the internet is still an overwhelming force for good, especially in these challenging times. It gives Americans a platform for their voices to be heard. It keeps us connected to our loved ones. It offers unprecedented access to information and unlimited opportunities for innovation.

So I appreciate our witnesses for being here today to share how we can all strive for a better and safer internet for all.

Freedom of speech is central to American democracy. It is what sets us apart from nearly every other nation on Earth, and yet this bedrock principal is increasingly under attack. Free speech is not absolute, and there are certainly exceptions, like when it comes to physically harming others or one's self. However, I am extremely concerned when platforms apply inconsistent content-moderating policies for their own purposes, whether it is an excuse to take responsibility for failing to enforce content standards fairly or by altering speech to settle scores with political or competitive opponents. There is no clearer example of a platform using its power for political purposes than Twitter, singling out President Trump while also leaving blatant threats of violence by activists, Democratic candidates, and authoritarian foreign leaders untouched.

Twitter's rules say that they are intended to ensure all people can participate in public conversation freely and safely, but that is not what we are seeing. To further its leadership's political agenda, Twitter has instead embraced an inconsistent application of

its own standards.

For political speech we disagree with, the answer should not be censorship. The answer should always be more speech. And for harmful speech, it should be removed, regardless of the political leanings of the speaker or the moderator.

Sadly, Twitter has fallen well short in encouraging healthy discourse online. For example, the following are blue checkmarked tweets and accounts that exist on Twitter today. Unlike President Trump, they haven't been fact-checked or tagged for violation of standards by @jack. The World Health Organization shared this propaganda from the CCP, quote, "Preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel #coronavirus."

That is false.

Another example is a well-known online activist of the left who has repeatedly doxed and falsely accused independent people of heinous crimes like falsely accusing a Texas State trooper of rape. He also accused an innocent man of murdering a 7-year-old girl. Death threats were also sent to the man's family, and he ultimately took his own life.

This online activist also used Twitter to threaten the lives of innocent police officers in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Twitter said this didn't violate their standards. This tweet is word-for-word from a candidate challenging Republican Congressman Brian Mast. She tweeted, I quote: Is that really the new rule they want? Killing is okay if it's a bad guy? It is now open season on Trump, Barr, Kavanaugh, Pompeo, end quote.

Can you imagine if the President or any Republican said that about Democrats? My only hope is that the Secret Service took this threat more seriously than Jack.

These are only a few examples of blatant hypocrisy by Twitter.

Bottom line: Twitter continues to tag the President's tweets with increased

frequency as we approach the election. But they have ignored violent threats against Republicans, allowed for propaganda pushed by the Chinese Communist Party, tolerated doxing, and the incitement of violence against police officers, and also left clear threats by the Supreme Leader of Iran go unchallenged.

This doesn't add up, and it doesn't build trust in the fair enforcement of Twitter's content standards. It begs the question: What is the point of their terms of service and content policies if Jack is intentionally applying them differently, depending upon who the user is? Is Twitter a fair and safe platform for free speech and the battle of ideas or a platform where content bias is acceptable as long as it influences the election in favor of the political whims of the woke mob?

If the majority is truly concerned about platforms having an effect on the upcoming election, I hope that you will join me in a demanding accountability from this platform that is blatantly putting its thumb on the scale for one side over the other.

And I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Rodgers follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. The gentlelady yields back.

And now the chair of the full committee is recognized, Mr. Pallone, for 5 minutes.

The Chairman. Thank you, Chairwoman Schakowsky.

Extremists who sow chaos and division, incite violence, and impose their radical beliefs and ideologies remain an ever present threat to our welfare society and way of life in the U.S., and the magnitude of that threat has become painfully clear in recent years: 11 worshippers massacred in a rampage at a synagogue in Pittsburgh; more than 46 shoppers killed or injured in the mass shooting targeting so-called Mexicans at a shopping center in El Paso; 9 Black worshippers murdered by a white supremacist during a Bible study in Charleston, 2 killed and wounded by a vigilante shooter in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Extremists are even exploiting COVID-19 to divide our Nation in a time crisis. According to the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, in March, a New Jersey white supremacist group altered its propaganda and social media posts to falsely claim that immigration and Jewish people are behind the pandemic. Their members have since attended anti-lockdown events to push these egregiously false claims.

So there is just a lot of anger and resentment across this country. Only last night we saw pleas for justice in the Breonna Taylor case left unanswered by the judicial system, and this led to violence in the streets, including the shooting of two police officers, and such violence is obviously unacceptable. We have to work to promote civility and unity. The right to peacefully assemble and seek redress from the government is a constitutional right, but I fear that extremists online and in the streets are taking advantage of these turbulent times to divide our Nation and threaten its people.

Acts of violence, disruption, and misinformation represent a troubling trend of increasing extremist activity across the country. Four of the six most deadly years for domestic extremist killings have occurred since 2015. And experts warn that current political and social polarization, coupled with increasing economic disparity, are ideal conditions for even further increases in extremism.

Now, while extremism is not new, methods for indoctrination, radicalizing, and mobilizing individuals have evolved over the past decade. The internet, an efficient tool for the dissemination of hate and radical ideologies traditionally left in the fringes of society, has become the predominant incubator for extremism. And social media platforms have served as the predominant outlet for bigotry, conspiracy theories, and incitements to violence. Social media companies represent their platforms as forms for connecting people, but the ability to connect likeminded people and susceptible individuals is being exploited by extremists to recruit and radicalize Americans.

Now we have seen too many stories of young people, many whom are socially and physically isolated, who found a sense of belonging with people who turn out to be members of a hate group. They get lured by gradually more extreme content and then risk the threat of losing these new social connections if they do not conform, and conforming too often includes taking part in acts of hatred, intimidation, and even violence.

This is deeply concerning, and this activity is magnified by social media's business model, which only makes the problem worse. The primary goal of social media platforms is gaining more active users. Their profitability depends on growth and engagement, more eyes on their pages for longer periods of time to more advertising dollars. And as research has shown, lies, outrage, and novelty are more engaging than neutral, bland content.

It is not that employees at these companies make a conscious choice to allow this hateful content, but their algorithms are programmed to optimize growth and engagement, often without consideration of the content that achieves it. And these algorithms don't just let harmful content exist on the platform; they actually amplify it. The deluge of harmful content drowns out countermessaging, content that could correct misinformation, and discredit the ideologies and actions of violent extremists. Because people are already overwhelmed, it is clear that this bad speech cannot be connected solely with more speech.

Rather than acknowledge and tackle the root of the problems, social media companies address only the public relations aspect. They rely heavily on user reporting to address extremist content, allowing disinformation and inciting content that could be viewed thousands of times before it is flagged or removed.

Once more, there is no doubt some political figures are fanning the flames of extremism. This toxic political rancor is contributing to the rise of rightwing extremism in particular, which has become the greatest terrorist threat facing our nation today. The majority of all terrorist incidents in the U.S. since 1949 were committed by rightwing extremists.

So we have had several hearings over the past few years trying to shine light on these problems and imploring social media companies to act. It is clear they don't want to do it on their own. So I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about their experiences and their ideas for how Congress can make a difference.

I have no doubt, Madam Chair, that we have to act. This is not going to correct itself on its own. So thank you for having the hearing.

And I yield back to the chairwoman.

[The prepared statement of The Chairman follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. The gentleman yields back.

And now it is my pleasure to recognize Mr. Walden, the ranking member of the full committee, for 5 minutes for his opening statement.

Mr. Walden. Well, good morning, Madam Chair and Mr. Chairman. Thank you for having this hearing.

I really want to welcome our witnesses, too, to learn your perspectives and hear your experience.

My colleagues have heard me say a few times over the years I have been on the committee, I have a degree in journalism, was in the radio business for more than 2 decades, and I think it is given me an important perspective on free speech and our liberties as guaranteed under the Bill of Rights. It has also provided important perspectives on the responsibilities that platforms have to ensure voices can be heard.

I have said before it feels like social media has really become a cancer on civility, and I think all sides can probably agree on that. The challenge is, what do we do about it while protecting our First Amendment rights?

You can learn a lot from history. In fact, if you think back to radio in 1938, Orson Welles had that radio program that inspired panic in dramatizing a Martian invasion with an adaptation of H.G. Well's novel "The War of the Worlds." Despite notices that it was fiction, people still believed it was real at the time, and it set off a furor.

Unfortunately, in today's social media age, a furor set off by misinformation has become all too common. It spreads more quickly and further, and it is often harder to recognize. In fact, this year, following the tragic death and murder of George Floyd in May, Washington, D.C., experienced its own strange occurrence online. With no disclosure, it was fictional content. Under a hashtag @DCblackout that went viral on

Twitter, claims were made that the internet service had gone down, despite no legitimate news sources corroborating that information. That viral campaign went unfettered on Twitter for hours and spread to other platforms.

To quote The Washington Post, "The thread swelled with untrue claims that authorities had somehow blocked protestors from communicating from their smartphones to crack down on the unrest, which included looting and some fires," close quote.

The tweets included images of Washington burning, images we would learn later were from a television show, not from real life. During this event, we now know there were fake and hijacked accounts involved with the misinformation campaign around the events in Washington. And despite its ability to quickly spot trends for its own promotional purposes, as well as suspect activity and accounts, it concerns me that Twitter was not able to promptly spot this misinformation platform. This is a problem.

People of every ethnicity, age, gender and religion are harmed when these events escalate and bad actors look to turn peaceful protests into violent riots. The platforms must do better, and they owe it to their users to share publicly how they plan to do that.

In fact, Chairman Pallone, Chairwoman Schakowsky, Subcommittee Republican Leader Rodgers, and I wanted the CEOs of these companies to be here today. It is not the first time we have requested they appear, and it is always helpful and appropriate when the leaders of these amazingly successful American companies come before congressional committees and explain their practices, which they did over 3 years ago while I was chairman of the committee.

Some have been willing to appear, but others, like Google, have yet to do so. Users of their service deserve answers, like Ms. Dumpson, who should feel safe to study at place of her choosing; police officers like Mr. Donohue who has to worry about his

brothers and sisters in uniform being targets of vicious violence. I hope to be more enlightened from the questions and debate that we have here today.

I also want to share my disappointment that the majority's memo for today's hearing did not include ambush-style kills of law enforcement officers as a form of mainstreaming of extremism. Let me be clear: Extremism that results in violence is wrong, and that includes the terrible ambush-style killings of law enforcement officials. The Democrat's memo stated that, from 1994 to 2020, a quarter of terrorist incidents and 22 deaths were committed by leftwing extremists who oppose capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism, or supported decentralized political systems such as anarchism. That number should, sadly, be a lot higher, but the memo looked the other way when it came to ambush-style kills of law enforcement officials. You have to ask why. Think about how that must make their families feel.

Our great country has had a rough time in 2020. I think we will all be glad to put this year in the rearview mirror. But along the way, I hope we have realized how modern tools of communication can easily be misused, abused, should I say, and how important it is that we all work together to both protect free speech without ripping the fabric of the country and to protect the safety and well-being of online users. Hopefully the platforms will rise to the challenge and do more voluntarily. Otherwise, Congress will have to step into this fray.

With that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Walden follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. The gentleman yields back.

And the chair would like to remind members that, pursuant to committee rules, all members' written opening statements shall be made part of the record.

And now I would like to introduce our witnesses for today's hearing. Mark Ginsberg is president of the Coalition for a Safer Web. Taylor Dumpson, she is a hate crime survivor and cyber harassment target. I want to thank her for her personal testimony. John Donohue is a fellow at Rutgers University Miler Center for Community Protection and Resiliency and former chief of strategy initiatives at the New York City Police Department. And, finally, Tim Kendall who is chief executive officer of Moment.

So we will -- we want to thank our witnesses for joining us today. We look forward to your testimony, and we will begin with Mr. Ginsberg, and you have 5 minutes for your opening statement -- for your testimony. Thank you.

STATEMENTS OF MARC GINSBERG, PRESIDENT, COALITION FOR A SAFER WEB; TAYLOR DUMPSON, HATE CRIME SURVIVOR AND CYBER-HARASSMENT TARGET; JOHN DONOHUE, FELLOW, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY MILLER CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND RESILIENCE, AND FORMER CHIEF OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES, NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT; AND TIM KENDALL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MOMENT.

STATEMENT OF MARC GINSBERG

Mr. Ginsberg. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and to all members of the committee, thank you for having me.

Believe me, whatever may be your political persuasion, I share your pain. The Coalition for a Safer Web is a relatively new nonpartisan, nonprofit organization. Our mission is to promote new technological and policy initiatives, to protect Americans against the threat of internet-based radicalization and extremist violence.

I want to particularly recognize my vice president, Eric Feinberg, who has done so much to help further the mission of our organization.

As was stated by all the members, a poisonous brew of extremism groups from both fringes of the political spectrum, both here and abroad, have succeeded in hijacking and gaming social media platforms to radicalize Americans. The best evidence is the increase in arrests by the FBI and local authorities of radicalized domestic terrorists attracted to neo-Nazi ideology, so-called Antifa ideology, radical Islamic groups, anarchists, et cetera, as we have seen constantly in the cities that have been under siege, including Portland. And this has gotten worse since the pandemic and the terrible

events in Charlottesville. The threat is so acute that the FBI considers domestic extremist groups a first-tier threat.

Because the business model of major social media companies is dependent on digital revenue, there is no financial or legal incentive to independently enable oversight or vigorous accountability denied as long as section 230 of the Communications Decency Act provides a shield to these platforms.

Major social media companies, and I am referring to Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, are consistently breaking their pledges to do better to protect Americans from extremist content. Meanwhile, radical groups trolling for converts have revised ingenious methods to evade detection, assisted by extremist-supported web communications and hosting channels, many operating with European-based and Russian Government support.

I want to now turn to YouTube. YouTube's management has evaded congressional and media scrutiny as it hides behind its parent, Alphabet and Google. It is a puzzle to me since YouTube stands out in the radical hit parade as one of the worse purveyors of extremism, and I would like to give you an example that really has set us off. It has ignored repeated demands, demands that I, myself, have communicated to CEO Susan Wojcicki to remove -- listen to this -- tens of thousands of videos instructing would-be terrorists how to construct terrorist weapons, including pipe bombs, pipe bombs that were used by the Boston Marathon bombers, pipe bombs that were in the knapsack of the man who committed the shooting of Parkland High School, and the list goes on and on.

In addition, YouTube hosts uploaded virulent video games, inviting young users to target Jews and Blacks. For young Americans, YouTube has become a veritable black hole of digital shark bait to radicalize and train users to fall prey to social media's

application algorithm rabbit holes.

I would like to now say a few words about Facebook. Time and again Facebook has assured Congress and the public it has permanently removed extremist content deemed a violation of its ever-shifting terms of service, but we at our organization continue to find it. Exhibit A is the livestream Christ Church video, which Facebook's executives have said time and again it is permanently deplatformed. Of the 15 Christ Church videos that we in our organization have located on Facebook and in Instagram since January 20, 13 remain, others using language accounts including Arabic, Russian, and even Yiddish.

Moreover, Facebook's artificial intelligence flagged these videos as graphic violence, sort of giving it an R rating, enabling them to remain. Really? Is that the way Mr. Zuckerberg permanently deplatforms such content that he has promised to do?

We have assessed that Facebook's AI is simply untrained to detect previously deplatformed content tied to non-English-speaking account. Four people in our organization were able to find what legions of Facebook engineers are unable to do so. Moreover, Facebook has failed to take down QAnon accounts, which we revealed in a recent report and also amplified by an investigation by The New York Times just a few days ago.

I think that there is a reason why Facebook refuses to take the action necessary. First, if it adopted the type of technology that we recommend, it would require it to disclose the gap between its pledge and performance by letting individuals such as ours to access its API. And it is not prepared to let third-party technology innovators to access API.

I want to close by saying a word about Telegram. Telegram is a platform of encrypted communications that has become, in effect, the most important purveyor of

extremist radicalization linking transnational extremist groups between Europe and the United States. Telegram's Dubai-based management is culpable for enabling the spreading of the QAnon conspiracy and neo-Nazi and radicalization back to the United States, using Russian Government trolls.

We hope that Congress will join our call to action to urge our ally, the United Arab Emirates, as well as both Apple and Google, to in effect deplatform Telegram. And I will have more to say about that in our questions.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ginsberg follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you.

The gentleman yields back.

I do want to encourage the witnesses to stick to the 5-minute timeline.

And, Ms. Dumpson, it is yours for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF TAYLOR DUMPSON

Mr. Donohue. Good morning, Chairman Pallone, Chairwoman Schakowsky, Ranking Member Walden, and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers and members of the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my personal experience and perspective about the role of social media companies in radicalizing America and perpetuating extremism and hate on their platforms. Unfortunately, I know firsthand that online hate ruins lives by stoking fear, silencing voices, and causing harm to people's physical and professional safety, all of which have a serious, lasting effect on victims and their families. And just because it happens digitally does not mean it should be taken less seriously. Hate should never be normalized.

"Nigger Agitator," "Negress," and "Sheboon" were just a few of the words used by Andrew Anglin, known white supremacist, founder of the neo-Nazi website The Daily Stormer, and co-organizer of Charlottesville's Unite the Right rally, to describe me after I became the first Black woman to hold the position of student government president at the American University in May 2017.

On May 1, 2017, the day after I was sworn in as president, a masked perpetrator hung bananas from black-corded nooses from light posts and bus stops around my

campuses, as you can see in this picture right here. The bananas were labeled with "AKA" and "AKA FREE," making reference to the predominantly Black sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, of which I am a member, and made reference to "HARAMBE BAIT," referencing the gorilla that killed at the Cincinnati Zoo in 2016.

As this viral act gained national attention and was investigated by the Department of Justice as a hate crime, my story must have come to Andrew Anglin's attention. By May 4, 2017, Anglin has taken it upon himself to incite a coordinated cyber harassment campaign to encourage his followers to, quote, send me some words of support, end quote, and by doxing and providing his followers with direct links to my Facebook and Twitter pages.

In other words, Anglin and his followers posted my personal information online with the intent for the information to be used to harass, stalk, and threaten me and to be used against me for an unlawful purpose.

Due to his notoriety amongst those in the white supremacist community, Anglin's followers heeded his call to action. Since Anglin's troll storm, some of the threatening, racist, and sexist comments directed at me on social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter include but are not limited to:

Quote: I will take a few years for painting the street with her blood.

Quote: I wish I knew her address. I would send her a noose so she can go hang herself and do the world a favor.

Quote: I think I'd take my chances with hiding her small pit (ph) body after her fatal accident.

Quote: Just smash her in the head with a bike lock hard enough to split her head open with a wound that needed stitches. I seen you only get probation for that offense.

There are more statements similar to those in my -- and can be seen in my written

testimony.

As a result of this experience, I was diagnosed with post-traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, and depression and lost 15 percent of my body weight. I also experienced flashbacks and triggers and am forced to take increased measures to protect myself and my family. Most importantly, the harassment that Anglin incited on various social media platforms continues to this day, despite Anglin's troll storm being initiated over 3 years ago.

I am now used to reviewing, filtering, identifying, screenshotting, and saving multiple threatening and harassing comments on a monthly basis in the event that the comments rise to the level of a true threat, specifying time, place, and manner of attack. But I should not have to be.

This is why I sued Anglin, The Daily Stormer's parent company, and two other defendants in Federal court for violating the District of Columbia's Human Rights Act, which prohibits individuals from interfering with someone's use of a public accommodation, with pro bono representation by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, The Washington Lawyers' Committee, and Kirkland & Ellis, LLP.

In *Dumpson v. Ade*, Judge Rosemary Collyer set precedent by ruling that online racist and gender-based harassment can interfere with an individual's equal access to a place of public accommodations, as I had to make significant changes to how I navigated on a day-to-day basis both on and off campus.

Weeks ago, Facebook was yet again apathetic to racism and incitements of violence and the call-to-arms event that resulted in a Kenosha shooting was flagged over 450 times, but once again, Facebook did nothing. Unfortunately, this does not surprise me because, out of the hundreds of times I have reported the hate directed at me on Facebook and other platforms, the social media companies have never contacted me,

despite it being brought to their attention.

I speak from experience when I say that when online social media companies are left to regulate themselves, instances of hate, bigotry, and prejudice run rampant under the guise of free speech. Today extremists are using the internet for the purposes of recruiting, organizing, and mobilizing members of their digital community to commit threatening acts online and in person.

In 2017, H.R. 3067, the Online Safety Modernization Act, was introduced which would have provided Federal protections against doxing and swatting. However, it was not signed into law. This is why I am a big supporter of initiatives like ADL's Backspace Hate and the Stop Hate for Profit campaign to raise awareness and combat harmful online activities, including cyber harassment, swatting, and doxing.

But Civil Rights activists and organizations cannot do this work alone. Congress must act. In my written remarks, I offer six ways that Congress can act to address the rise in hate crimes, both online and in person, in partnership with the ADL. And I look forward to discussing some of these recommendations in the question-and-answer portion of this hearing.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dumpson follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you very much for your personal testimony, and I want to recognize Mr. Donohue for 5 minutes for his testimony.

STATEMENT OF JOHN DONOHUE

Mr. Donohue. Thank you, Chair Schakowsky.

I am pleased to testify today about the serious public safety concerns and specifically challenges to law enforcement raised by the growing phenomenon of cyber social extremism and its power to influence violent action domestically. The challenge has both strategic and tactical considerations for law enforcement, which I will discuss in more detail.

To begin, we know that social media, the use of it for promoting ideas and opinions and encouraging participation in civic discourse is well documented. The platforms are mobile and ubiquitous, and platforms want participation. They have become astonishingly effective in capturing and leveraging human behavioral data right down to the individual. Here in the U.S. where we cherish constitutional rights to free speech and peaceable assemble, social media has been embraced to share ideas and opinions on any topic at any time, but what is recently observable from open-source social media data is that there is an exponential growth in participation around revolutionary and extremist themes across the ideological spectrum.

But why is that a problem? You heard it a little bit earlier. In the earliest stages of the ISIS caliphate, social media was used to effectively motivate some youth to take up arms in support of that designated foreign terrorist organization right here in America. Recruitment started on the surface web and gradually moved to encrypted

communications to shield criminal conversations from law enforcement. I saw what happens with extremist ideology and what it can do on the streets of New York.

That same cycle is happening domestically with movements on the far right and the far left. A report I co-authored earlier this year with my colleagues from the Network Contagion Research Institute shows how on social media memes become viral, evolve, permitting extremists to plant hateful and revolutionary ideas right in the public eye, often disguised as jokes or code words for those in the know. You heard about the boogaloo, the far right militia movement. In protests over pandemic lockdown, boogaloo people played out their inside jokes by wearing Hawaiian shirts and carrying semiautomatic weapons at protests in the center of major American cities and memes shared on boogaloo message boards gamified assaults on law enforcement, encouraging violence through jargon known in the video gaming community.

And while it appears that the online malicious fear is inhabited exclusively by the far right extremists, they are not by any means alone. In a report released this month, my colleagues in the NCRI quantified that online violent, anarchic, and other far less social media spaces saw exponential growth, upwards of 1,000 percent, during the most recent period of unrest in America. These anti-government, anti-police messages broke into the main extreme, including Facebook and Twitter, where they have their greatest reach.

Encouragement of violence, designs for ghost guns, dehumanizing opponents, advocating physical attacks on law enforcement and elected officials, and sharing tactical countermeasures to legitimate governmental activity to control riotous criminal behaviors, all of these and topics and more are shared on public forums and pushed to people's smartphones.

These may be original ideas, and they don't have to -- they may be original ideas and thoughts, but they don't propagate themselves. It is the algorithms that drive profit

for social media companies that push that information onto people's social media feeds. That is the strategic challenge. What extremist thoughts and ideologies are pulsing through the internet and social media, and who should understand how such ideologies are evolving? What is apparent is, regardless of the ideology, criminal behavior during recent civil unrest were motivated in part by what is happening online. That is the tactical issue.

For example, protest activity is constitutional. Police are sworn to protect it. It is the criminal activity that is at issue for the civil society and police, and intelligence gathering brings its own tensions and limitations. Law enforcement needs information to prepare for the safety of all of these events. That is smart government, and safeguards are in place to prevent overage. Frankly, much of what law enforcement needs comes from open source. But social media companies have unilaterally limited when, how, and what they will share. And when trying -- particularly when they are trying to address life safety issues, social media companies continually stymie public safety. Law enforcement has a tough time when policing in the best of times.

So what can be done? Despite social media companies' efforts to minimize the availability of extremist messages like we just heard, the self-imposed standards are ad hoc and more likely to resemble a game of whack-a-mole. And to be certain, social media companies are not in a position to identify those who are mobilized to violence. Law enforcement is and must remain vigilant to identify and act beforehand, but the timeframes are remarkably short. We know before the murderous attack of the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in October of 2018, the murderer said on a website: I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics. I'm going in.

While law enforcement is the last line of defense against extremists who mobilize to violence, it is ironic that they have become the ultimate target. The outcomes of

extremist movements are not predictable, and the time for acknowledging social media platforms' culpability in this phenomenon and rapidly working to preserve civil society is upon us. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

And I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Donohue follows:]

***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you.

The gentleman yields back.

Thank you.

And now, Mr. Kendall, it is your time for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF TIM KENDALL

Mr. Kendall. Thank you, Chairperson Pallone and Chairperson Schakowsky and Ranking Members Walden and Rodgers, for inviting me to speak today.

When I started working in technology, my hope was to build products that brought people together in new and productive ways. I wanted to improve the world that we all lived in.

Instead, social media services that I and others have built have torn people apart with alarming speed and intensity. At the very least, we have eroded our collective understanding as a country. At worst, I fear we are pushing ourselves to the brink of civil war. I feel shame by this outcome, and I am deeply concerned by it. So I am compelled to talk to you all about what we can do to further limit the damage and maybe even undo some of it.

My path in technology started at Facebook where I was the first director of monetization. I was later the president of Pinterest for 5 years. And since leaving 3 years ago, I have been the CEO of Moment which is a technology company focused on reversing many of the troubling outcomes created by social media.

At Facebook, I believe we sought to mine as much human attention as possible and turned it into historically unprecedented profits. To do this, we didn't simply create

something useful and fun. We took a page from Big Tobacco's playbook, working to make our offering addictive at the outset.

Tobacco companies initially just sought to make nicotine more potent, but eventually that wasn't enough to grow the business as fast as they hoped. So they added sugar and menthol to cigarettes so users could hold the smoke in their lungs for longer periods. At Facebook, a simple directory of people engaged millions of users and kept them returning to the service almost every day, but business realities necessitated that we make the service even more engaging.

So we added updates, photo tagging, and likes, which made status and reputation primary and laid the groundwork for the growing mental health issues we see resulting from these services.

I left the company in 2010, but I continue to watch the company evolve and see the outcomes unfold.

The next page in Big Tobacco's playbook was to add bronchodilators to cigarettes. This allowed the smoke to get in contact with more surface area of the lungs. Allowing for misinformation, conspiracy theories, and fake news to flourish were Facebook's bronchodilators.

But that incendiary content wasn't enough. Tobacco companies then added ammonia to cigarettes to increase the speed with which nicotine traveled to the brain. Facebook's ability to deliver this incendiary content to the right person at the right time in the exact right way through their algorithms, that is their ammonia. And we now know it fosters tribalism and division.

Social media preys on the most primal parts of your brains. It provokes, it shocks, and it enrages. With misinformation, these companies hide behind First Amendment and assert that they stand for free speech, but the algorithms continually

choose which voices each of us actually hear. I don't think it is free speech that these companies revere. Instead, Facebook and their cohorts worship at the altar of engagement and cast other concerns aside, raising the voices of division, anger, hate, and misinformation to drown out the voices of truth, justice, morality, and peace.

On a personal level, I am aware that I have benefited from these addictive business models, and this deepens my sense of responsibility for where we are and my sense of obligation to help us improve things. I don't believe that I could have known at the time where the work I contributed to would lead, but for my role do bear responsibility, and accordingly, I am dedicating my time and resources to undo as much damage as I can.

I don't believe social media is the root cause of every problem we are facing, but I believe it may be the most powerful accelerant in history. I am not a lawyer or legislator, but I can't imagine where we would be if we hadn't held tobacco companies accountable for make so many people sick. And yet this is what we have allowed social media companies to do, and I believe it has to change. These services are making us sick. These services divide us. It is time we take account of the damage, and it is time we put in place the necessary measures to protect ourselves and our country.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kendall follows:]

***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

Ms. Schakowsky. The gentleman yields back.

And, with that, we now have concluded witness opening statements.

At this time, we will move to member questions. Each member will have 5 minutes to ask questions of our witnesses, and I will start by recognizing myself for 5 minutes.

The title of the hearing is "Mainstreaming Extremism." How did we get here, and how can we fix it? To answer those questions, we need to take a deep look at online platforms which are an increasingly great part of our daily lives.

Mr. Kendall, while you were with Facebook or -- and Pinterest, did you -- did people within the company discuss the potential harms that a new product or feature could pose to users or to society? Were there times that the company chose to release the product or feature designed, despite the potential harm that it could cause?

Mr. Kendall. This was primarily an issue at Facebook; much less of an issue at Pinterest. I would say, at Facebook, you know, the primary discussion around harm revolved around privacy, right, user privacy. And we raised concerns about that in many instances of new product releases. I would say the MO of the company was that oftentimes those concerns were ignored. What superseded that was a view that, look, more features that connect more people is good for the network and good for the world.

Ms. Schakowsky. Well, let me ask you another question on that line. I assume that Facebook considered legal liability risks when deciding how and whether to launch a new product. In your experience, was a product's ability to facilitate extremism, racism, or violence considered in that legal risk assessment?

Mr. Kendall. It was considered but then heavily discounted. I mean, I think that the timeline of the FTC imposing threats against Facebook and then those being

ignored for years and years and years and years until really last year when there was a \$5 billion fine I think highlights the pattern, which is that they don't respond to constraints. They don't respond to threats. Where they appear to respond, and I think privacy is a good path to look at, is when there are real economic costs to the business.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you.

Ms. Dumpson, I just want to thank you for the personal testimony and the personal pain that it must bring you even today to repeat that.

I want to see if you could tell a little more about what the online attacks meant for your life. And in your written testimony, you talk about how it changed -- the changes that you have had to make. I wonder how did you deal with going to classes and to participate in normal activities -- or didn't you?

Ms. Dumpson. Thank you, Congresswoman.

When the hate crime initially happened in May 2017, it happened during finals week. So I missed my final exams. I was forced to drop my minor in sociology, as the material that I was reading in class was very triggering for my own PTSD that I was learning and trying to figure out how to cope with. I had to take classes incomplete. I incurred a number of expenses because I was walking -- or I was taking a car instead of walking or getting on a bus as the bananas were hung from bus stops. I had to install security cameras at my home. I had to travel to an undisclosed location even when we filed the lawsuit, and I had specifically had to decrease my social media usage.

And so to the point about the answer to hate speech is more speech, it actually is false. That is a faulty notion because it assumes that more speech is actually going to be more counterspeech and not more hate speech, and what I have experienced is that I had as a millennial I had to completely decrease and almost halt my social media usage in the way I communicate with my friends, the way I communicate with my family, because I am

at risk for doxing continuously because, unfortunately, like other people who experience this kind of harassment, once your information is out there, it never goes away.

Ms. Schakowsky. That is painful to hear, and I thank you.

And I yield back.

And now I recognize our ranking member for 5 minutes of questions.

Mrs. Rodgers. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And, Ms. Dumpson, I, too, want to say thank you for being here and sharing your story. I think it is outrageous and unacceptable that anyone would be targeted and have to endure what you have. So thanks for sharing.

I was going to start with Mr. Donohue. I, too, want to thank you for your years of service. You and your brothers and sisters in the blue put your lives on the line every day to protect and secure our communities. We are definitely living through some troubling times. And, unfortunately, we are seeing where platforms are being used today by politicians to push dangerous movements like defund the police. City councils are trying to dismantle local police forces. And individuals use social media to intentionally put officers' lives on the line.

Mr. Donohue, do you have a message for platforms like Twitter about the real-world implications of what is happening on their platform?

Mr. Donohue. Absolutely. Thank you. Thank you, Congress Member Rodgers.

And I have colleagues from around the country, from Boston and Pennsylvania to Texas, that are feeling the strain of what is being played out on social media towards policing and towards the right approach to trying to protect civil society.

Platforms such as Twitter and Facebook and others are propagating all of those antipolice, antigovernment messages. They are the same platforms that delivered

horrendous content to Ms. Dumpson. And the challenges that we face at a tactical level to platforms like Twitter and Facebook is that they are incredibly difficult to deal with from a law enforcement perspective.

And to amplify what Mr. Kendall had said, it is true that they are more concerned about privacy because that is where the pushback has come. But the anonymity that is also ripe on those platforms make it equally more difficult to try and protect people like Ms. Dumpson and police officers that are in the line of fire literally at violent protests around the country.

Mrs. Rodgers. Thank you.

Ambassador Ginsberg, in your written standpoint, you discuss Telegram and how it was used by Antifa and other groups to recruit individuals in Portland, Oregon, to engage in violent protests against police. Can you explain what you saw there and whether you believe app stores should do more to vet apps being used for nefarious purposes? He is muted, I think. You are muted.

RPTR MERTENS

EDTR ROSEN

[11:59 a.m.]

Mr. Ginsberg. Sorry. Thank you.

Mrs. Rodgers. Try it again. Thank you.

Mr. Ginsberg. We have had three reports in the last 2 months about how Telegram was utilized by both anarchists and white nationalist groups to not only target police, but also to instigate violence against protesters on the other side. And to not only instigate and incite, but we saw that Telegram and communications were actually directing where rioters should go to the least protected police sites, or where police were located.

And so, what we really saw here is how Telegram has become, in effect, probably the worst mobile application in both the Google and Apple store that is serving as, in effect, a major conveyor of radicalization, and most importantly, a very dangerous app that has been hijacked by everybody who is sending QAnon Q drops to QAnon supporters to direct individuals and rioters to attack authorities, and most importantly, to radicalize German and Russian government trolls, and German neo Nazi groups to push even more radical content across the Atlantic into Telegram accounts in the United States, of which there are over 200 million worldwide.

Mrs. Rodgers. Thank you. Yep, very good. Thank you.

Finally, Mr. Donohue, you were also -- in your written statement, you talked about the surge in anti-police, anti-anarchist messaging on the far left of social media and the memes and hashtags that are advocating the murder of law enforcement. Can you explain how social media platforms and Twitter have played a role in the nationwide coordinated violence that we have seen recently?

Mr. Donohue. Absolutely. And what we have seen more recently is the emergence of certain code words, things that in my 32 years of policing, I had not heard before, and I will reference them. It is ACAB, or F12. These are terms that never existed. I had never seen it anywhere. And in the months after the murder of George Floyd, in the short months after that, the type of vitriol directed at police directly as a consequence of that, and demanding the murder of police officers on Twitter and Facebook, and those memes and slogans shot up 300 to 1,000 percent, and these are things that have never been seen before. So that is how the type of activity that we are talking about and the consequences on police, where we are literally trying to protect peaceful protesters, have turned violent against us.

Mrs. Rodgers. Thank you. I yield back. Thank you for the extra time.

Ms. Schakowsky. Yeah. Let me now -- can you hear me? Am I on mute? I am good? Okay.

And now, I am going to call on Kathy Castor for 5 minutes. It looks like Frank Pallone is not here, the ranking member, so Ms. Castor, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. Castor. Well, thank you, Chairwoman Schakowsky. Thanks to all our witnesses. Ms. Dumpson, you are courageous. Thank you for sharing your story and working so others don't have to experience the hate and harassment that you have lived through. Mr. Donohue, my heart goes out to our public safety officers who are being targeted. It is outrageous, and we have got to make all of this stop. You know, this subcommittee has held a number of important hearings on the ways social media companies and online platforms are harming consumers and society, but I think this hearing today might be the most important.

The online surveillance of individuals through online platforms has evolved now into dangerous manipulation. The surveillance and manipulation goes on without

permission and knowledge of the individuals. And, even worse, online platforms like Facebook and YouTube make billions of dollars as this goes on, with this stomach-churning stew of illegal activity like the sale of opioids, child sex trafficking, fomenting of violence, online abuse.

So the witnesses today have testified about how social media companies and online platforms are amplifying the extremist views and radicalizing people across America and across the planet.

This manipulation is having real-world consequences, and I am especially worried about children. Our children are being surveilled, they are being exposed to extremist content, and being manipulated, and the long-term consequences are very serious.

So I have introduced the Kids Internet Design and Safety Act, or KIDS Act, along with Vice Chair Clarke and Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton. It is similar to Senator Markey's bill, and the Senate would make it unlawful for platforms directed to children to amplify, promote, or encourage extremist views or fail to implement a mechanism for users to report suspected violations. So Congress needs to act. I am going to look forward to Chair Schakowsky's draft bill, because I am eager to act here.

Mr. Ginsberg, how are online platforms promoting extremist messaging to children? And what are the best steps that parents can take right now to protect their kids?

Mr. Ginsberg. Thank you, Madam Congresswoman, for the question. I go back to the example of YouTube and how young teenagers are being lured onto video games, which, of course, is something that young children and young adults like to use that, in effect, bait them into shooting at Israeli soldiers wearing Jewish Stars of David by Nazi soldiers. When they log on to those accounts, you have to understand the fungibility of looking at YouTube and Facebook and Twitter as one big social media platform because

we tend to make the mistake of segregating these systems.

But in the end, one radical account on Facebook all of a sudden lures a young kid from YouTube onto Facebook and onto Twitter, and that is part of the problem with all their ridiculously different terms of service.

Number two. The other thing that we have seen is TikTok, and that hasn't been mentioned here. TikTok has used the parody of a Bruno Mars song, Locked Out of Heaven, to parody the Holocaust.

Now, there were young kids dressed up in concentration camp garb on this TikTok video; tweens, who had no idea, of course, of what they were doing or appearing to be doing. And the fact that TikTok permitted this to happen, it is not the first time. This is an example of where now that TikTok has become such a major issue here in the United States, the idea that a video like that would be permitted to be having young kids participate in it as a parody of the Holocaust. Well, it speaks for itself.

Ms. Castor. Yeah. That is sick. I mean, that is just plain sick. So it seems like Section 230 is an impediment to us protecting our kids. What is your view?

Mr. Ginsberg. Absolutely. Section 230 is the holy grail for social media companies, and we long have advocated that the partisan divide about Section 230 needs to come to terms with the fact that as long as 230 is on the books, social media companies will only have a moral and not a legal or financial responsibility to protect our young people as well as Americans.

Ms. Castor. And to close, Mr. Kendall, I watched The Social Dilemma last night, and I heard you loud and clear that you don't let your kids on to social media at all. I recommend all of you while you are staying safe at home to watch this Netflix, The Social Dilemma. It is quite illuminating. So thank you.

I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you. I would second that advice, The Social Dilemma. And let me now recognize Congressman Bucshon for 5 minutes for his questions.

Mr. Bucshon. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and, you know, it is pretty clear to me Ms. Dumpson's story alone should be enough to convince the U.S. Congress to address this issue. Social media sites are no longer just platforms innocently posting content, and we need to reconsider whether or not they are more traditional news outlets. And governments around the world are going to have to address this and have an honest discussion here in the U.S. about Section 230.

Mr. Donohue, I appreciate the difficult line that law enforcement must walk in protecting the public, and in that regard, putting themselves in harm's way. It is a tough job, so I worry about the impediments that stand in the way of those duties. For this reason, I was especially stunned by the reference in your testimony that since 2016, Twitter specifically has intentionally ended sharing information with law enforcement, potentially life-saving information. Since Jack Dorsey hasn't taken us up on our request to testify this year, can you tell me why Twitter stopped sharing information with law enforcement?

Mr. Donohue. Absolutely. And I was part of the New York City Police Department's Intelligence Bureau at the time that that decision was made, and it put agencies around the country in the dark as to certain information that is collected by Twitter, specifically by Twitter, and was available to third-party providers of information that anyone, marketing companies, people that are amplifying messages to target you for, you know, what type of soap you should buy, or what type of razors you should use.

But they intentionally changed their terms of service so that that type of information, publicly available to anyone else, would no longer be available to law enforcement. And they did that at the request of the American Civil Liberties Union. It

is the question -- it keeps going back to the question of privacy. There are ways to protect people's privacy without hamstringing law enforcement.

I would just like to add one more thing, Congress Members, is that it is very difficult for law enforcement to get in touch with social media companies, who have on their sites, concerning life-threatening information that could be acted on to save people's lives or prevent catastrophe, and that needs to change.

Mr. Bucshon. Yeah. I mean, I just don't quite understand why if, you know, regular citizens know information that could lead directly to harm or death to other citizens, or that, you know, we are basically compelled by law in many ways to address that. I was a physician before, and so, you know, I understand this concept and present these things, you know.

If, for example, if someone is brought to the hospital who is at risk to themselves or others, you know, we are bound to report that, and that person needs legally adjudicated. But why social media companies that have information that could be harmful to others, you know, don't feel that that is the case. I do think we can balance civil liberty concerns and the need to protect the public, don't you?

Mr. Donohue. Absolutely. There are -- and I take to heart that you were a physician, because then you understand the importance of HIPAA, protections on privacy, on people's health records and privacy. And there are schemes that people have, legislative schemes, regulatory schemes that people have envisioned that would mirror HIPAA as a framework for how this type of information, human behavioral data, might be protected from the social media companies themselves.

And there are people that are far better off talking about that than me, but I have seen those potential opportunities. And we know that HIPAA works. And there has got to be a way to find a way to break that sharing of very valuable human behavioral

data that then forces certain information to people's cell phones, to their smartphones, that enables them to act.

Mr. Bucshon. Yeah. I mean, I can't agree more. I also would want to associate myself with Cathy McMorris Rodgers' opening statement as regards to bias. You know, I think even though we may identify bias that today appears to be mostly against the President of the Republican party, tomorrow it may be against the Democrat President of the United States, and it was, in fact, when President Obama was President. This is not a partisan issue, we need to address it, and I look forward to Congress further discussing it. And with that, I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. The gentleman yields back, and I now recognize Robin Kelly for 5 minutes.

Ms. Kelly. Thank you, Madam Chair, for holding this very timely hearing on social media and the spread of extremist content. I want to thank my Greek sister for coming forward. Thank you so much. Thank you for your strength. Thank you for sharing. Thank you for teaching us. I know it is not an easy thing to do, but thank you. And to Mr. Donohue, I have five family members that are or were NYPD, so I just had to say hi to you.

Mr. Donohue. Very good. Thank you.

Ms. Kelly. You know, we are really concerned about, you know, with elections around the corner, you know, what is happening, and we know we need to pay very close attention to what is shared online.

Mr. Kendall, you were Facebook's Director Of Monetization for approximately 5 years, and you were instrumental in developing their advertising business. During your discussions at Facebook to monetize the product, I assume there was a close connection between monetization and engagement. How much in increasing

engagement drives decisionmaking at Facebook?

Mr. Kendall. Engagement drove everything at Facebook, and I assume -- I am not there. I haven't been there for 10 years. I assume it continues to drive everything today. You know, we initially used engagement as sort of a proxy for user benefit, you know. It seemed to be this indicator that users liked what they were seeing, but we started to realize that engagement could also mean that they were sufficiently sucked in, that they couldn't work in their own best long-term interests to get off the platform when it wasn't making them feel good, or when they felt like they were getting cornered by, you know, various messages, or sucked into groups whose beliefs didn't necessarily align with their own. So we started to see real life consequences, but you know, they just weren't given much weight. Engagement always, always won. It always trumped.

Ms. Kelly. Most of the mainstream platforms say they are doing a lot to combat extremist content, hate speech, and the like, but it is clearly not enough from the story we heard today. Is there any incentive for Facebook and other social media companies to stop or try to prevent harmful content like conspiracy theories or extremist ideology?

Mr. Kendall. I mean, there is not -- I mean, there is no incentive to stop, and there is an incredible incentive to keep going and get better, right. In my opening statement, I talked about ammonia. They are incentivized to go find the next ingredient that will be all the more powerful. And I just don't believe that is going to change unless there are financial or civil or criminal penalties associated with the harm that they create.

I think without enforcement, they are just going to continue to be embarrassed by the mistakes. And they will talk about empty platitudes, about you know, Oh, gee, we hope we can get better operationally next time, but I don't believe anything systemic will change.

Ms. Kelly. So you don't believe social media companies are capable of changing

their own behaviors based on current law?

Mr. Kendall. No. I just think the incentives to govern -- well, I think the incentives to keep going, to keep the status quo, are just too lucrative at the moment.

Ms. Kelly. There is no moral consciousness, it sounds like.

Mr. Kendall. Yeah. I mean, I just don't think that -- I mean, I think the objective is to create value for shareholders which is about giving -- you know, driving that revenue, driving profits, and that is just a function of how much time people spend on the service. And people spend more time, the more we make them angry, the more we enrage them, the more we addict them.

Ms. Kelly. Okay.

Mr. Ginsberg, in your testimony, you document in multiple instances of disturbing content being spread on social media platforms. How do you believe social media companies should treat content that is going viral? Should a human review content if it reaches a certain threshold, or will AI magically solve these content modernization issues?

Mr. Ginsberg. Thank you. As we pointed out -- as I pointed out in my testimony, what is the problem, for example, at Facebook is that its application algorithm is totally consistent with its efforts to, in effect, deplatform radical content. And worse, it is even unable to identify the toxic content that comes across accounts in other languages. And we can't even understand that because with all their technicians, you would think that they understand that radical content is coming across their platforms in Arabic or Russian or German, et cetera.

And one of the things, if I may add, the advertising industry has a responsibility here. It is the revenue leverage that is the only leverage, the only financial leverage on social media platforms. And I really hope the committee in the future will bring in representatives of the advertising industry which formed a global alliance for responsible

media to, in effect, try to coerce social media companies to be held to account, but they are both fungible. They all need each other. But the fact remains is that the ad agency can help more to do here than what they are doing right now.

Ms. Kelly. Thank you. My time is up. I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. I am now happy to recognize my friend, Buddy Carter, for 5 minutes.

Mr. Carter. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank all of you for being here and for participating in what is truly an extremely important subject matter. And, you know, this is bipartisan. This should concern all of us, and I think it does concern all of us.

Let me begin by saying that social media companies have moved to more aggressively moderate and police the content on their platforms, but the approach has varied significantly. While some of efforts are able to go after accounts and posts that clearly violate their terms, they also ignore or refuse to take down other content. For example, Twitter refused earlier this year to remove a tweet by Iran's supreme leader which called for the destruction and genocide of the Israeli people. Twitter responded that these tweets were not in violation of their policy.

I want to start with you, Mr. Donohue, and ask you: Can you explain to me, as best you can, how some platforms maintain policies that are inconsistent and create more problems?

Mr. Donohue. So while I am not a coder, I understand what is being published online in those forums. Their content and their individual corporate terms of service, which people who can post on it are free to do so, and accept those terms of service. But they vary, based on both the platform, the jurisdiction where they are incorporated, and what is supposed to be driving their profit motives?

And I listened to Ambassador Ginsberg and Mr. Kendall very clearly that it is the

profit motive that drives it. And when you look at hyperbolic statements like the one you just spoke about, and yet, having a response, I take it at its face value that they said, No, that doesn't violate our terms of service in their posting.

That is a real concern. And we have seen it with respect to things that are happening here in the U.S. And I could expand upon that with regard to extremist-disturbing content about advocating the murder of police officers.

Mr. Carter. Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Donohue.

Mr. Ginsberg, let me ask you. Anti-Semitism is a problem that continues to show its head. It is more than a problem. It is awful, and it is something that we need to eliminate. How can these anti-Semitic posts be rationalized as not being in violation of Twitter's rules? I don't get it. Can you explain that to me?

Mr. Ginsberg. Well, they make it up as they go along, Congressman. Depending on the prevailing winds and the amount of pressure on them, most of what we see in terms of, for example, anti-Semitism right now is from QAnon accounts, which itself has a major component of anti-Semitism in it. And the real problem here is that each of these companies have their own terms of service, and they decipher them and interpret them as they want, which is one of the reasons I said in my testimony we are calling for the creation of a social media standards board that would create a harmonized code of conduct across the industry that was modelled after the 1970s Financial Accounting Service Board that harmonized all of the different standards that the banking industry had.

Mr. Carter. Let me ask you something. I will start with you, Mr. Donohue, but I would also like Mr. Ginsberg to respond to this. Is there any telltale characteristics of users that can help to identify some of these things, some of these posts? Are there any consistencies there?

Mr. Donohue. So one of the things that is really complicated, and we have seen this in some of the work that I did with the Network Contagion Research Institute is that it is the context in which things are said, and that really requires talented analysts.

In my prepared testimony, it is the idea that while concerning content can be somewhat understood by some of the technologies that the companies have put in place, it also requires eyes on. And that is why the coded messages -- a very, very disturbing message that was posted on December 20th, 2014, before the assassination of two New York City police officers was a text that was -- it was a social media post by the assassin that said, Let's go put some wings on pigs. And that wasn't picked up because it wasn't contextualized beforehand. So it is the idea that people have to put eyes on it to understand what it means.

Mr. Carter. Mr. Ginsberg.

Mr. Ginsberg. I just want to add very quickly, Congressman, that one of the things that we see in the spread of anti-Semitism on social media is the enormous role that fringe, deep, and dark web chat rooms and messaging boards play in promoting anti-Semitism on to major social media platforms. I don't know if you're familiar with Gab or AKUN or the other fringe boards that have become safe havens for white nationalists, neo-Nazi groups which, of course, are not the attention of this hearing, but I want to assure you, are just as responsible for the spread of anti-Semitism into our mainstream discourse than anything else.

Mr. Carter. Well, thank you. And thank you for your indulgence, Madam Chair, and thank you for all of your participation. I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. And now it is my pleasure to recognize Mr. O'Halleran for 5 minutes.

Mr. O'Halleran. I thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and Ranking Member. I

appreciate being able to host this committee today for you.

Social media sites have proven ripe for disinformation and extremist content. Social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, have responded differently to extremist content on their platforms in attempting to moderate the most vile content. However, these efforts remain disjointed and, frankly, insufficient. What has resulted has been a dramatic increase in the usage of social media by extremists over the past 15 years.

These failures do not just result in isolated incidents either, and domestic law enforcement agencies are paying attention.

In May 2019, the FBI's Assistant Director of their Counterterrorism Division, Michael McGarrity, noted in testimony to the House Homeland Security Committee: Radicalization to balance of domestic terrorists is increasingly taking place online where violent extremists can use social media for the distribution of propaganda, recruitment, target selections, and incentivize to violence.

Through the internet, violent extremists around the world have access to our local communities to target and recruit and spread their messages of hate on a global scale as we saw in the recent attack in New Zealand. Social media has provided these individuals with a platform, like no other, and other like-minded individuals to virtually congregate that results in other similar-minded attacks.

More needs to be done, and additional government coordination with the social media sites is necessary to prevent the spread of extremist content.

We also need to discuss the role that fringe social media sites play in spreading the extremist content. Sites like 8chan have spawned domestic terrorists, and those sites lack even the basic interest in content moderation. Real attacks that have resulted in loss of life have occurred, and no tangible progress has been made in stopping this.

Mr. Donohue, I have a question for you. Thank you for, first of all, joining us today. Can you speak to, based on your experience as a former New York City police chief, how the communication between Federal agencies and local police departments can be improved to better respond to the threat that extremist actors pose to civil society?

Mr. Donohue. Thank you very much, Congress Member. You raised Mike McGarrity's name and his testimony last year. As a matter of fact, the New York City Police Department assembled a religious and ethically motivated violent extremist investigative squad as a consequence of what the FBI had been seeing, and are actively investigating occurrences of that type of activity in the New York region. But what is significantly lacking is that ability to create for smaller jurisdictions, smaller municipalities, and less well-funded jurisdictions, the ability to reach out when an issue occurs, or when these types of concerns, of the strategic concerns that I spoke about earlier, come to the fore. Because smaller jurisdictions -- there is 18,000 local and State county police departments around the United States. They are not a monolith, and they certainly don't have individualized capacities to do it.

They need to leverage fusion centers to be able to get information from the social media companies, as well as being able to further disseminate that information, both up and down the chain from Federal authorities and from the localities. There are structures in place to make sure that civil liberties are protected, and I believe that we have a lot of energy in that direction to be able to strengthen those relationships.

However, the social media companies need to be willing partners, or there has to be a cudgel used to bring them to the table.

Mr. O'Halleran. Madam Chair, I see my time is short, so I will yield.

Ms. Schakowsky. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Now I recognize Congresswoman Blunt Rochester for 5 minutes.

Ms. Blunt Rochester. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and I want to especially thank the witnesses today for this very important hearing, and especially Taylor Dumpson. Taylor, your courage to stand up against hate groups like The Daily Stormer and racist bullies inspires each of us to do more. And your work to shine a light on these issues is so important now more than ever.

One of the things that you said is that hate should not be normalized, and that is one of the big messages that I am going to take away from this hearing.

And I wanted to ask you. I know 5 minutes was not a lot of time. Is there anything else that you wanted to share with us as members of the subcommittee that you didn't get a chance to say in that 5-minute opening? Any advice to us?

Ms. Dumpson. Thank you. One of the things I wanted to bring to y'all's attention is that from the very first moment I became a hate crime survivor, I have been fighting back against this through almost every free moment between going to school, spending time with my family and friends. But I have been sharing my story with students, with academics, religious communities, legal professionals, and elected officials to really get at changing the hearts and minds and also changing the law. But every hate crime survivor shouldn't be expected to respond and react the way that I have.

Unfortunately, when the hate crime happened on May 1st, it received national media attention, which meant that cameras were in my face less than 3 days after the initial event, so I didn't really have much of a choice to step into this role. But since I am here, I am dedicated to using my platform to bring these issues to attentions of Congress Members. So for that, I want to kind of pivot to how Congress can act in this space.

Congress can do three things immediately to address the rise of online extremism and hate which is to, first, increase hate crime reporting and data collection by

incentivizing and encouraging State and local law enforcement agencies to more comprehensively collect and report on hate crimes to the FBI, as well as increasing their trauma-informed preparedness, because I know that in the times where I have reported my instances of hate and harassment to law enforcement officers, they have not been trauma informed. They have not always responded to me, and they have not always been technologically competent to be able to address and act on the harms and threats that I have received.

The second thing is to hold perpetrators accountable and to better support survivors by enacting Federal doxing and swatting legislation, and strengthening protections for victims and targets of hate crime and cyber harassment. I was able to sue three individuals and one corporation, but I was not able to sue the thousands of people that have continued to harass me to this day.

And then the third thing is to compel social media companies to be accountable and to be transparent by supporting research and enacting legislation so that people like me don't have to experience hate crimes in person or digitally on a daily basis. It is clear that the hate crime social media -- sorry. It is clear that tech companies are not holding themselves accountable, and so it really is up to Congress to act here.

Ms. Blunt Rochester. Thank you so much, Taylor. And I wanted to ask, and I will submit some questions for the record for the other witnesses because of time, but I was able to send a letter with members of our committee, as well as other members, to Facebook regarding civil rights and the actions that they are going to take, and you can see the lackluster response.

I would love to know from Ambassador Ginsberg, as well as Mr. Kendall, if there are examples of platforms that have taken good steps to address extremism, and if so, who are they?

Mr. Ginsberg. Well, each one of these platforms will be able to have demonstrated a certain amount of progress, and they try to tout that in every testimony that they produce before the Congress, but the problem is, is that they are doing it at their own speed. And to say that one platform is doing worse than the other or better than the other is to, in effect, belie the fact that all of them are making -- are creating the same mess and compounding it even more so with the support of these fringe platforms and with the support of other internet techniques and technical platforms like Telegram.

So I would say that, for example, that Facebook could be doing a much better job if it, in effect, joined other organizations in supporting a more comprehensive, harmonized code of conduct and, in fact, said we will not let Telegram be dictating to us what radical content should come on our platform. They are not doing enough of that at all.

Ms. Blunt Rochester. In the last 20 seconds, Mr. Kendall, can you just hit on -- I know you have talked about the monetization. I know you have talked about the algorithms. Anything that you want to share in the last 15 seconds?

Mr. Kendall. Well, I just think the current policies are incomplete, and they are incomplete everywhere because the incentives aren't there to put in place good policy. So, obviously, you know, you can't incite violence but you can lie and incite hate, and we all know that that leads to violence. It is all about accountability.

Ms. Blunt Rochester. Thank you all so much for your testimony, and we will be submitting additional questions for the record. Thank you so much, and I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. The gentlewoman yields back.

And going to the next member of the subcommittee, I recognize Darren Soto for 5 minutes.

Mr. Soto. Thank you, Madam Chair. According to a 2018 MIT study, a false

story reaches 1,500 people six times quicker on average than a true story does. And while false stories outperform the truth on every subject, including business, terrorism, and war, science, and technology, and entertainment, fake news about politics regularly does best. The rapid distribution of lies and hate in social media threatens the foundation of our republic. Foreign nations are intruding in our elections, in commerce, and in our lives. Impressionable members of our population are being radicalized, and being sorted into massive national political extremist networks, and lives are being destroyed.

Members, we are the lawmakers. We have the duty to protect the American public online, and we have the power to do so. This subcommittee specifically is charged with the duty and power of reform. We simply need the will to act. Make no mistake about it, members. Social media extremism and criminality is not invincible, it is not unstoppable, and it is not unsolvable.

We can establish social media platform liability to compensate victims, and force changes in business behaviors, and we can regulate algorithms to stop proliferation of false and violent information. The fact that these companies are no longer Nation startups just beginning to develop these technologies is important.

They are now a mature industry, the social media industry. Its companies are found among the ranks of Fortune 500 companies, even Fortune 100 companies.

Mr. Kendall, we can simply make social media companies liable for damages and for criminal activity perpetrated on their platform. Do you think this would be a sufficient and costly enough incentive for social media companies to more actively police their networks for criminality?

Mr. Kendall. I do. And I think that the -- I think that all we can do is sort of look at precedent and look at what has happened, particularly with Facebook historically,

which is that the threats around privacy and their getting their act together around user information didn't do anything. And it wasn't until 2019 when there was a \$5 billion fine, and then ongoing structural penalties put in place for violations that they cleaned it all up, and we haven't heard anything about it since.

Mr. Soto. Thanks, Mr. Kendall. I agree. Right now, these costs are externalized to society. We need to internalize them to the companies themselves, because right now, they are not internalizing them.

Ms. Dumpson, I am so sorry to hear about what happened to you. We appreciate your courage in telling your very personal story. Do you think that social media networks were at all culpable in the perpetration of hate crimes against you.

Ms. Dumpson. Thank you for your question, Congressman. Yes, I do, and that is because the social media companies, while they continue to say that they are working on these issues, they have never responded or addressed these issues. One example is just like 3 days ago on YouTube, somebody commented underneath of an interview that I did about a year ago. There are about 2 million views on that video that is on YouTube, but there are 13,000 comments. And one of the comments was, She probably tied those bananas from nooses herself, as if to suggest that I was behind the hate crime that was enacted on May 1, when there was video footage there. And the harassment that I continue to receive from these platforms has not been taken down despite my efforts, my friends' efforts, my family members' efforts, to report these things continuously. Some of the harassment is also more threatening, like statements, and I quote, "I wonder what color the blood looks like. I think I would punch her in the face and take a battery charge for a few years." And people have even gone so far to place threatening calls over the phone.

And so, it seems to me that there is no limit or, you know, no stopping on how far

extremists are willing to go to spread their message, and to target survivors and victims.

Mr. Soto. Thank you, Ms. Dumpson.

Mr. Ginsberg, how do we regulate to adjust algorithms to limit the proliferation of false information? What would be your recommendation?

Mr. Ginsberg. My recommendation is that there is software technology that was developed, including by our own vice president, Eric Feinberg, that has the ability to machine-learn and teach algorithms to identify extremist content. If I told you that Facebook's algorithms are untrained to identify radical content, for example, in different languages, and yet, there is third-party technology out there that could help teach those algorithms to do so, you would essentially ask, why wouldn't Facebook want to acquire that technology, correct?

Mr. Soto. Absolutely. So the technology does exist. We justly merely need to require them to internalize those costs through laws.

Thank you so much. I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. The gentleman yields back, and now I am happy to call on Doris Matsui for her 5 minutes of questions.

Ms. Matsui. Thank you so much, Madam Chair, and I want to thank all the witnesses for appearing here today.

The discussion has sobering and important, and this topic cannot be more topical or pressing. When you think about everything else that is happening with over 200,000 deaths from COVID-19 and Americans taking to the streets to demand justice and equity, opportunities for extremists working online to undercut our efforts are significant. We need to take action.

I appreciate all of you for being here, and particularly Ms. Dumpson. You are very brave. And I think any one of us could be subjected to the hate that you have been

subjected to in a manner -- in a different, separate manner, perhaps. But to have that constantly on your mind and surrounding you, that is something that we have to address. You have to monitor this all the time. It is part of your life. And I have to say that it is something that I don't think any one of us would wish on anybody at all, even the person that we don't like the most.

But you were talking about before the correlation of the vitriol in posts targeting you, and the amount of times they are shared of you, which means that as they continue and people like them and they continue sharing them, they are out there, and as you said before, you can't pull them back at all.

So, for you, do you see that constantly continuing now in the sense that even though you have done everything you possibly can, it is still out there?

Ms. Dumpson. Thank you, Congresswoman. And yes, every time that I do events like this, whether I am speaking to students, whether I am speaking on a panel, whether I am speaking to Congress, any time my name is put out there, it is synonymous with hate crimes. It is synonymous with The Daily Stormer. But then that provokes these online trolls to go out of their way to find me. So, I have been personally monitoring one particular interview that I did with CNN in September of last year, and I have been monitoring it over the past year, and I have seen a number of trends within the just-one-comment thread alone. That post was not just posted on YouTube, it has also been posted on Twitter. It has also been posted on Facebook.

And so, I don't have the capacity to go and find all of the different things with my name in it. It is impossible. And it is also very triggering for PTSD and depression and anxiety to read the threats that are directed at you every day. So my mom and my dad try and get me not to read it, but it is very important for me to see it, though, because -- unfortunately, because there are not protections in place at this current time, I

don't have anybody else that is responsible for doing that. And so, I am going to be out here in the world going blind if I am not going out of my way to monitor and make sure that I am on top of my safety, but that responsibility shouldn't rest on me.

Ms. Matsui. Absolutely. You know, as we discussed, while Facebook or another company may remove a post for violence, these posts can be copied, as happened with you, and shared through alternative channels.

Mr. Kendall, in your opinion, you know, why have social media companies struggled to address this phenomenon? And are they devoting sufficient resources to tackling this problem? They say they have, but what can we do to really encourage them to do so?

Mr. Kendall. Well, I don't think they are doing enough, and as I said earlier, I think it is really just a function of incentives. Their incentives are to grow revenue and maximize profit, because that keeps the valuation of their company high, that keeps their employees happy and retained, and it allows them to continue to dominate as a platform.

So I just don't think the incentives are there. I think the capability is there, and we have seen that in their compliance with privacy. And I saw that when I was there in terms of their ability to marshal resources and technology know-how, to solve really tough problems that were seemingly intractable that, then they were able to solve.

Ms. Matsui. So, basically, privacy comes up an awful lot here. We always believe in our own privacy and how important that is. But to me, from the discussion here, that privacy has come up an awful lot as the way to get into this as a cudgel, so to speak, to really alert them that we are looking at this in a way that would affect them most importantly, where their bottom line is. So is that something that all you would agree to as far as trying to tackle this? Mr. Ginsberg?

Mr. Ginsberg. Well, I would just like to point out what European countries have

done. You know, there is such a Transatlantic divide between us struggling here what to do with social media companies. And when you send an executive from Facebook or YouTube across the pond, they are actually facing a totally different, a much more strict regiment of laws that would hold them both also criminally liable for failing to take down the content within a certain period of time.

I know that these laws obviously can't be replicated here, but the subcommittee would benefit, I think, from understanding how many different national laws have been adopted to deal with these privacy issues. France, for example, is just about to pass a new hate law to, in effect, punish social media for doing precisely the type of activity that is so unfortunately affecting Ms. Dumpson.

Ms. Matsui. Thank you very much. We can go on with all of these conversations. Madam Chair, thank you. I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. The gentlelady yields back, and now I am recognizing a member of the subcommittee, Mr. McNerney, for 5 minutes.

Mr. McNerney. Well, I thank the chairwoman, and I thank the witnesses. Very tough testimony, very interesting and useful. It seems to me that this is a bipartisan issue. Both sides want to move forward on this, so I look forward to seeing progress.

My first comments are directed at Mr. Kendall. Last year, I sent a letter to Mr. Zuckerberg expressing my concerns about the conflict of interest at Facebook between their bottom line and addressing the spread of political disinformation. I asked a series of questions at the hearing about their content moderation practices and handling of disinformation. This includes the process of using third-party fact checkers, something the company often points to because they don't want to be, quote, "arbitrators of truth."

One of the questions that I asked in the letter and Facebook failed to answer and

then I asked again when they testified, and they still failed to answer, was about the average time it takes from when a suspicious content is posted on Facebook's platform, for Facebook to flag the content for the third-party fact checkers, for the third-party fact checkers to review the content, and for Facebook to take remedial action after review is completed.

Despite Facebook's answer, or failure to answer congressional inquiries, a journalist discovered that in the entire month of January, only 300 pieces of Facebook content in the United States underwent third-party fact checking, and that most of the content undergoing this process had been posted on Facebook's platform for a week or longer.

Mr. Kendall, once content is posted on Facebook, what is the timeframe during which most of the sharing, consumption, and monetization occurs?

Mr. Kendall. Congressman, thanks for the question. I couldn't -- I don't have the expertise to answer that question.

Mr. McNerney. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Kendall. I have seen graphs around this, you know, in my career. And certainly, when something is time-relevant and incendiary, it spreads very quickly, very fast, and it generates a tremendous amount of engagement. And so, I would say with time-sensitive, incendiary content, you know, you make a disproportionate amount of the money in the first 24 hours, possibly even the first hour.

Mr. McNerney. Correct. That is exactly my understanding. Would you agree that a company relying on content review process that isn't like this one, isn't prioritizing and addressing the spread of disinformation on its platform, and it doesn't have a real incentive to do so?

Mr. Kendall. I would agree.

Mr. McNerney. Thank you. The American public does deserve more than a press release every time a social media company announces that they have taken down -- I am sorry? They -- I have to start that sentence over again.

The American public deserves more than a press release every time a social media company announces that they have taken down a fake account, or when they are looking into making a minor change around the edges, which is what they usually do.

With 40 days to go until the election, and with early voting in mail already getting underway, I am extremely concerned that these companies aren't doing enough.

Mr. Kendall, what meaningful steps should social media companies be taking right now to combat the spread of social political disinformation on their platforms?

Mr. Kendall. Well, I think -- it is hard for me to know exactly how their resources are allocated. I haven't been there for 10 years, but it seems to me that the same amount of resources that they have applied to driving this sort of unprecedented engagement, both in terms of the technology and financial resources, but also the people, should be applied to these systemic and societal problems.

Mr. McNerney. They have the resources. There is no question in my mind about that.

To Mr. Ginsberg, President Trump has repeatedly retweeted posts by alt-right programmers and promoters and conspiracy theorists. The President of the United States has even gone on to quote fascists like Mussolini. What are the consequences when the government is calling a group a terrorist organization in one breath, and the President is supporting their idea in another?

Mr. Ginsberg. It is very dangerous. I mean, I can refer directly to the QAnon phenomenon, where there is hundreds of thousands of accounts that have crossed the pond that ricocheted back with even more radical content. And obviously, the President

is a central player in this QAnon phenomenon. So he, in effect, has become the hero among the most virulent neo-Nazi Germans as the new leader of this QAnon initiative to defund the state in Germany. I mean, could you be as any surprised as I am that Mr. Trump is a hero in Germany to the largest neo-Nazi group in Europe?

Mr. McNerney. Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. And I now recognize Congresswoman Dingell, who I know was here at the beginning, and I am glad to see that you are here now for your 5 minutes for questions.

Mrs. Dingell. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you for holding this hearing, which is really critical, and thank you to all the witnesses that are here today.

During this pandemic, we all are feeling more isolated than ever, which has left more people turning to the internet and social media in search of community. I have great concern that the pandemic and the isolation caused by it will exacerbate this issue that we are talking about today. I am really concerned about how this country is being divided by fear and hatred and, how it is threatening the safety and security of the individuals as we have seen in Ms. Dumpson's testimony, but I have seen with other people that I know in my very own community which I will talk to, hopefully before I end.

Extremist groups recruit and radicalize individuals by finding people who are socially isolated and give them a sense of belonging. And, now, due to the necessary measures to combat COVID-19, people find themselves like they have nobody to talk to or connect to, which is putting a greater risk of being brought in by these extremist groups.

So it is crucial that we examine the impact that COVID-19 has had on the proliferation of extremist content and the measures we need to take to combat radicalization, division, and hate. This is of critical importance.

I think I am going to move directly, given time, to something that impacts my own community, which is home to one of the largest Arab American populations in the country. It is well-documented that militia and extremist groups have used platforms, such as Facebook, to organize events, often including a call to arms designed to intimidate specific communities, such as the Muslim and Arab communities and incite violence. I, quite frankly, have had people outside my home with assault weapons. Me, myself.

So I really know firsthand. I probably shouldn't have said that publicly because I don't want to see more of them.

In many of these instances, pages and events are reported to Facebook, but the companies don't give a damn. They show a pattern of negligence in responding to or removing the content that promotes violence against vulnerable communities.

In July 2020, Relman Colfax released their civil rights audit report of Facebook's policies and practices. The report detailed the need for further investment in addressing and studying organized hate against Muslims and other targeted groups on the platform. These findings represent a clear and present danger to these groups, and inaction continues to contribute to the violence being perpetuated against these communities in the United States and abroad.

Mr. Kendall, I listened to the testimony and the many thoughtful questions and answers today. There is a lot of ideas out there. We talked about changing incentives, but what else can be done to hold companies accountable when these communities are targeted on the platform?

Mr. Kendall. Well, I think at the moment, from a policy standpoint, the only thing that is, at least by virtue of that policy that leads to a takedown of content, is when violence is incited. But as I mentioned earlier, if you incite hate and rage or demonize

that group, that doesn't get taken down. But we all know that that kind of content leads to violence. It is just not directly connected to the platform, right, because the violence wasn't planned on the platform, at least not explicitly.

And so, I think that we have got to get clear on some sort of gradient around hate speech, even when it doesn't incite violence explicitly, because we all know it leads to it.

And so, I think lawmakers need to ideally work with the companies to figure out, from a gradient standpoint, what is the line at which an opinion becomes hate speech? And when that line gets crossed, I think the content needs to either be flagged or taken down.

Mrs. Dingell. So, Madam Chairwoman, I do want to request unanimous consent to submit for the record the civil rights audit report conducted by Relman Colfax and their press release by Muslim advocates detailing multiple cases where Facebook was warned of the hateful content and failed to take direct action.

[The information follows:]

***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

Mrs. Dingell. I have very little time left, Mr. Kendall, but how do -- what is violence? Being outside somebody's home with an assault weapon? Is that violence or is that hate or is that fear? How do we protect free speech but keep somebody safe? How do we actually have or shape these standards? I think it is something we have got to do. We really need to be worried about that in this country. Go ahead.

Mr. Kendall. I think you have got to start somewhere. I think you start by doing it in the first place. You know, I think that there were probably similar challenges with pornography, and similar challenges with nudity on certain platforms, but that is not a legality issue. But these platforms are somehow able to keep all nudity off.

Now, that is a little bit more objective. But pornography in instances is much more subjective, and much more nuanced and gray. But we tackled that challenge, and we now have technologies in place that help us with that. I just feel like there has got to be a way to do that with respect to hate language.

RPTR WARREN

EDTR SECKMAN

[1:02 p.m.]

Ms. Schakowsky. Your documents will be added at the end of the hearing.

And I see that the chairman of the full committee, Frank Pallone, is here.

And I am happy to recognize you for 5 minutes.

The Chairman. Thank you, Chairwoman Schakowsky. I was down on the floor dealing with the energy package.

I did want to comment though on what the ranking member, Mr. Walden, said about police ambush attacks. I thought he implied these should be attributed to leftwing extremists, but, unfortunately, police are targeted by extremists of all sorts. In fact, two recent ambush-style attacks perpetrated by rightwing extremists were motivated by the boogaloo movement's ideology. So I hope this hearing addresses extremism without partisan finger pointing because I think it comes from both the left and the right.

I wanted to start with Ambassador Ginsberg. We all know the platform's shared talking points: Hate speech has no place on our platform. Violence and extremism are not tolerated here. There is no safe haven for terrorists on our site.

But far too often that rhetoric doesn't match the reality. Hateful and violent comment is running rampant on most platforms. Earlier this year, it took repeated pleas to Facebook from my friend Rabbi Kotler, who is from Lakewood, and we got together with him and government officials to get a local Ocean County, New Jersey, hate group's page removed. Soon after it was removed, the group started several new pages. So it is very hard to get these things changed, and I went through it myself with some of the anti-Semitic rhetoric that was on there.

Ambassador Ginsberg, you have stated in the past that you often find extremist material on social media sites before the social media company itself finds it. Can you expand on that? How effective are social media platforms in dealing with extremist content, and what more could they be doing?

Mr. Ginsberg. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Well, it really comes down to technology and what technology companies like Facebook are willing to adopt. I have explained in my prior comments that Facebook's algorithms are not able to detect extremist content, for example, that is used by extremist groups in other languages, even Yiddish.

So, for example, there is technology out there that is called machine learning technology that would train the algorithms to more expeditiously identify extremist content if Facebook would allow this third-party technology to peer into its API, which is in effect the holy grail or the CliffsNotes of their algorithms, and that is the problem.

I have not seen any instance where Facebook or any other platform has permitted any third party to look into the underbelly of their algorithms because, I think, they're afraid that we would find out that they really don't want to see a complete 100 percent takedown of extremist content.

The Chairman. So you are talking about more transparency about the algorithms or the ability to evaluate and improve them. Is that basically what you are discussing? You want to talk a little more about that, the transparency and how, you know, that, if the research experts had access, they would be able to improve them and prevent extremism?

Mr. Ginsberg. Yes, absolutely.

And I think another reason is their legal counsel in each of these companies serve as bars to having this technology adopted because these counsel, and I have been told

this by Facebook's product counsel, that they do not want to introduce third-party technology for fear that courts would interpret that as having these platforms accept responsibility for content and, therefore, could have perhaps vitiate section 230. So you are in a vicious circle here.

The Chairman. Well, let me ask you one thing with about a minute left. What role -- oh, you know, actually I wanted to ask Mr. Kendall.

Mr. Kendall, if I could move to you, there is about a minute left here on my time.

What about personalization? What role does personalization play in amplifying radical content?

Mr. Kendall. Oh, I think it is central, Congressman. You know, Facebook has an unrivaled ability to deliver content to the right person at the right time in the exact right way, and so, right now, what they have created I am concerned about is 3 billion or nearly 3 billion echo chambers, individual echo chambers that just reinforce what people believe. And unfortunately -- and I don't think this is with the intention by the leaders there -- unfortunately, the algorithm moves people to more radical positions over time because that movement is good for business. If the content that I show you tomorrow is more incendiary, I believe you are going to spend more time on the platform, and that means that more revenue is generated.

The Chairman. All right. Thanks a lot.

Thank you, Chairwoman.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you.

And it looks like maybe last but not least the people who have not spoken yet, the vice chair of the committee, Mr. Cardenas, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Cardenas. Thank you, Madam Speaker. And thank you so much for having this important hearing.

I have a letter in my hand that has to do with what highlights the escalation of hate on online platforms and the need for civil rights advocacy in the social media and content modernization space. I would like to submit this letter from the National Hispanic Media Coalition for the record.

Ms. Schakowsky. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

Mr. Cardenas. Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

And thank you all for your testimony today and especially, Ms. Dumpson, for your bravery and for sharing your personal ordeal.

2,200 ads. 2,200 is the number of ads the current President's administration has run on Facebook referring to Latino immigrants as, quote, an invasion. It took 12 hours for a person to drive across the State of Texas to El Paso. The New York Times reported that 19 minutes before the first 9/11 call alerted the authorities to a mass shooting at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, a hate-filled anti-immigrant manifesto appeared online. Twenty-three people, the majority of which are Mexican Americans, died in August of 2019 due to what was referred to in the white supremacist manifesto as Hispanic invasion in Texas.

This is not a one-off issue. White supremacist groups are increasing their use of social media as a tool to distribute their message of hate to a loyal and captive audience.

My first question is to you, Ms. Dumpson. And, once again, thank you so much for your bravery. According to the FBI's annual report in 2017, hate crimes overall spiked by 17 percent where more than half of the reported crimes were motivated by race. In 2018, they increased even more, reaching a 16-year high in 2018. Based on your experience, Ms. Dumpson, to what extent does inaction by social media companies contribute to the manifestation of online hate in the real world?

Ms. Dumpson. Thank you, Congressman.

Unfortunately, silence is complicity. And when social media companies fail to act, they are complicit in the violence that is spread, they are complicit in the harm that is caused, and they perpetuate these kinds of acts in the future. Unfortunately, when these companies don't use their platforms for good, they allow these things to, like, as

you said, run rampant. They allow their platforms to be utilized in this way appeared. And so by failing to act, I -- it leads me to only wonder what other intent do you have for your platform to be used? In what other way can you desire your platform to be used?

This is precisely why I shared in my testimony that I have been working with a very diverse coalition of NGOs, like ADL, the NAACP, the Color of Change, LULAC, and others to engage these corporations and over 60 social media influencer celebrities, reaching out to billions of followers through the Stop Hate for Profit campaign, which has been calling on Facebook and social media companies to better address hate on their platforms. But in particular these -- this coalition hasn't succeeded with Facebook yet, and so I truly do think that congressional legislation action is needed.

Mr. Cardenas. Thank you, Ms. Dumpson.

Anti-immigrant groups demonize immigrants by promoting theories and conspiracies online that paint immigrants as outsiders who are planning to invade the country and take it over. Some anti-immigrants activists, for example, have embraced Aztlan or reconquista conspiracy theory, the idea that Mexican immigrants are plotting to take over the Southwestern part of the United States. This theory uses fear and hate to prop up claims that Mexican immigrants do not want to assimilate into American society.

Ambassador Ginsberg, what is being done to mitigate hate and harassment aimed at the immigrant Latino and communities of color on social media? And is it enough?

Mr. Ginsberg. Clearly, Congressman, totally not enough, and we are most concerned about the role of Russian Government and extremist groups that are anti-immigrant are using subsidiaries in Eastern Europe to promote anti-immigrant accounts in the United States. And, as you well know, anybody can add to a QAnon theory an anti-immigrant component, and when you add the QAnon phenomenon to the extremists that are being promoted by Russian trolls to in effect attack immigrant groups

and minority groups in the United States, it is a real toxic swamp. And I do not see anything near the velocity of takedowns by social media companies which are already, they were well aware of this phenomenon and this danger.

Mr. Cardenas. Thank you, Ambassador Ginsberg.

And my time has expired.

I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. And now after having waited through most of this hearing -- and I thank you for that -- I recognize Bill Johnson for 5 minutes.

Mr. Johnson. Madam Chairman, thanks for letting me sign onto the committee hearing today. This is an important one.

And, Ms. Dumpson, I tell you no one should have to go through what you have gone through. And that is what makes the topic of today's hearing so vitally important.

Mr. Donohue, back in 2016, I served on the House Energy and Commerce and Judiciary Committees' Joint Encryption Working Groups. One of the recurring takeaways from several meetings was the need for increased collaboration between tech companies and law enforcement, particularly local law enforcement agencies that don't really have the resources that are enjoyed by the FBI or large police departments like the New York Police Departments which you have worked for previously.

We heard that many of these smaller departments don't know who to call or what resources are available to them when they need assistance from a tech company. This is particularly concerning as the use of encryption is prevalent and the use of social media platforms by extremist groups continues to grow.

So I understand, at the New York Police Department, you were involved in policing strategy and intelligence as part of your responsibilities. Did your responsibilities include working with technology companies, and, if so, what was your experience?

Mr. Donohue. Thank you very much, Congress member.

I actually want to borrow something from what -- something that Ms. Dumpson said a little bit earlier, that the police are generally not technologically savvy, and that holds true with the majority of police departments in the United States. You know, the majority of police departments in the United States have fewer than 15 police officers in their jurisdiction. That is a fact. That is 65 percent of the police departments of the 18,000 only have 15 officers or less.

And to expect that they are all cognizant of the technology companies and the work that the technology companies do or how to extract evidence that is in plain sight about harassment or violence, the calls to violence is actually asking too much.

Now there are --

Mr. Johnson. Did you actually work with any technology companies in your role to try and get some of that information?

Mr. Donohue. So the answer is yes and the answer is there were varying degrees of success and over the course of our time in dealing with the big ones -- Google, Facebook, Twitter -- they were relationships that were formed ad hoc, and those types of relationships can't endure over the course of time. There need to be structures in place and places where police can rely on working closely with the tech companies because 18,000 people over the course of, you know, 365 days, the likelihood of getting the right person on the phone at the right time is almost impossible.

There are, as I said a little bit earlier, there are fusion centers that help channel that information back to the companies, but there are no phone numbers, no way to get in contact with the social media companies for a smaller jurisdiction that would make it easy to engage for life safety purposes or to get evidence of the crimes that happened to Ms. Dumpson or the crimes -- and that is the fact.

Mr. Johnson. All right. Let me ask you another question. And in your testimony, you stated that major law enforcement associations are working to establish a framework to improve reporting mechanisms between the public, law enforcement, and social media service providers. And that is encouraging to hear. So what suggestions do you have to those that are focused on that issue? What suggestions do you have for improving this critical relationship between tech companies and law enforcement? And is there a role for Congress to play in that? I mean, I am not a big regulation guy, you know. I think market-driven solutions and keeping the solutions at the local level is most important. But is there something Congress should be doing?

Mr. Donohue. There are frameworks that are being worked on by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and National Fusion Center Associations. Those ideas about bringing people to the table -- and specifically to what you say is, how can Congress force the social media companies to the table? And I think that is essential. That is the cudgel. And whether it is a responsible framework for providing and building those channels through the fusion centers or through major organizations, they can be supported through grants to Bureau of Justice Assistance, to help improve technology assistance to law enforcement. So there are ways to help that happen, but it has to be with the social media company. They cannot walk away from their obligations because we are seeing what happens on the streets of America.

Mr. Johnson. Okay. Madam Chairman, my time has expired. Thanks again for letting me hop onto the committee, and I appreciate it very much.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you for your participation.

Normally, we would end at this point. I just wanted to ask ranking member, Mrs. Rodgers, if she would allow one more question, each of us, if -- I certainly want one, if you can, and then adjourn so that we can make it to the vote.

Mrs. Rodgers. That is fine.

Ms. Schakowsky. Okay. So I wanted to ask Mr. Kendall a question. I did watch you on "The Social Dilemma," that wonderful documentary, and one of the things that you talked about is that platforms are able to actually tweak algorithms for whatever they need. I know maybe that is the ammonia factor that you were talking about, like, with the tobacco companies. And so they can manipulate those things. But what I really wanted to get to is, what are the things? You are saying -- I mean, I have heard apology after apology from Mr. Zuckerberg, I mean, ad nauseam and, oh, too bad about the genocide in Myanmar; we missed that, sorry, oops.

But the kinds of things that we can do.

And I want to ask you about 230, the clause that allows for protecting these media companies from any kind of liability, at least that is the way it has been interpreted. How important is the for us to change that?

And I also wanted then to ask Mr. Ginsberg to respond to that, 230.

Mr. Kendall. Congresswoman, thank you.

I think it is critically important. I am not exactly sure where to draw the lines from the standpoint that I do think section 230 was instrumental in allowing some of these companies at the outset to innovate and create these platforms in the first place, but I do think at a certain size, these technology platforms do become media companies and I think at that point need to be treated at such.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you.

And could I also hear -- did he leave? Oh, there you are. Okay. Yeah.

Mr. Ginsberg. Madam Chairwoman -- Chairman, the fact is section 230 has, in effect, been the beneficiary of \$33 million in lobbying effort by social media companies to avoid it being amended in Congress. I would remove its liability -- remove their

immunity from content liability. They even went so far as shoving section 230 onto the USMCA in order to make it more difficult for Congress to amend it.

There is no doubt in my mind and the mind of most people who have examined this that without removing the content immunity granted under section 230, these companies will never assume the type of obligation that you, the Members of Congress, need to have them assume.

Ms. Schakowsky. I thank you for that.

Is this one of the most important or are there other, just a couple more that we should add to the list of things we should be considering?

Mr. Ginsberg. I also would just make one more recommendation. In the absence of an amendment to section 230, I do think that the Congress should consider how to encourage the advertising industry to do more to leverage their influence to insist that social media companies do more because these advertising industry companies are interested in brand safety. Well, brand safety is going out the window the more radicalization occurs. And so they need to do more and they need to step up.

Ms. Schakowsky. Mr. Kendall, do you have any last advice for us, too?

Mr. Kendall. Well, I really like Mr. Ginsberg's point about, look, let's definitely hold the technology companies accountable, but let's also look at who is paying the technology companies, and I think they bear some responsibility. So I think the advertising industry can certainly with help that change.

Ms. Schakowsky. Well, thank you.

Mrs. Rodgers, did you want to ask a question?

Mrs. Rodgers. Well, given that they have called votes, I think I am going say thank you to all of our panelists today, our witnesses. Your perspectives were all very insightful and helpful.

I think, in all of this, it also underscores the importance of us as Congress taking action on privacy to really further hold companies accountable for how they are collecting data and how they are using that data and selling that data. I think that it is one of the -- it has only been underscored during COVID that there is not trust, and it was underscored again today. There is not trust between citizens and these -- and the companies and how data is being used, and then we have all these kinds of stories that are very concerning. So I think there is lot of work to be done. I want to say thanks for being here.

And thank you, Chair, for your leadership on this.

Ms. Schakowsky. I thank you so much.

I, too, want to, just before we adjourn, I definitely want to thank all of our witnesses. It was really, really important, this, I think, one of the most important hearings that we have had that really cries out now, I believe, for congressional action.

Before closing, we have some documents that I will read into the record. And I request unanimous consent to enter the following documents into the record. They include a statement by Representative Malinowski, a blog post by Neil Fried, entitled, quote, time for the -- "Time For the Section 30 Pendulum to Swing," unquote, a letter from CCIA, and NetChoice, a letter from Julian Sanchez, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, a letter from Will Duffy -- I am sorry -- Duffield, policy analyst at the Cato Institute, a letter from the Humane Society Legislative Fund, a letter from -- let's see, who is that -- oh, a letter from Consumer Reports, a letter from the National Hispanic Media Coalition, Facebook Civil Rights Audit - Final Report, a press release from the Muslim Advocates entitled, quote, "Facebook Ignored Warnings About Event Page Abuses."

And that -- those are the documents and, without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:]

***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

Ms. Schakowsky. I remind members who really aren't here right now that, pursuant to committee rules that they have 10 business days to submit additional questions for the record, but I do want to ask witnesses who may get those questions to answer and respond as promptly as possible.

And, at this point, the subcommittee is -- with additional thanks though, one more time -- this subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:24 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]