

Opening Statement for Republican Leader Bilirakis
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Legislative hearing on “Holding Big Tech Accountable: Legislation to Protect Online Users”

March 1, 2022

As Prepared For Delivery

Good morning, and welcome to today’s subcommittee legislative hearing.

Today’s hearing is the third in a series of what the majority calls “Holding Big Tech Accountable.” I certainly hope the fourth will be on a national privacy and data security framework.

For the December hearing, Republicans invited TikTok to testify as our witness, since they are at the center of so many of our shared concerns, but TikTok declined.

For this hearing, I appreciate that the Majority backed our efforts to invite this company, this time on a bipartisan basis but sadly, TikTok declined yet again.

Madam Chair, if we put our heads together, I’m sure we can figure out a way to get this company before our subcommittee like so many others who have appeared as part of OUR country’s democratic process.

The legislation today covers a broad range of issues. While I share many of the same concerns as my colleagues regarding Big Tech’s abuse of power, I worry about proposals that miss the target and hurt other parts of our economy.

Without more careful vetting, these bills will lead to a worse consumer experience, adversely impact American innovators and small businesses, and increase market dominance for large companies... specifically Google.

So far this Congress, this committee has heard from academics, industry experts, and consumer advocates. I’m pleased that today we finally get to hear law enforcement’s perspective. They are at the front lines of protecting our kids online, which is a primary focus in our fight against Big Tech.

I'm proud to welcome Mike Duffey, a law enforcement officer based in my home state of Florida, who has dedicated more than 20 years of his career to protecting our Floridians and our nation's children from predators and other dangerous threats online.

Law enforcement's insights are critically important as we consider multiple avenues to rein in the abuses perpetrated by Big Tech. I believe two bills under consideration today will help.

First, H.R. 6786, the Increasing Consumer's Education on Law Enforcement Resources Act introduced by Rep. Mullin, will require FTC and Attorneys General to develop a public education programs to inform our constituents about law enforcement resources regarding online safety.

The second is my bill H.R. 6755, the Cooperation Among Police, Tech, and Users to Resist Exploitation Act or "the CAPTURE Act," which will require the Government Accountability Office to research and provide recommendations on how to improve coordination and consultation between social media companies and law enforcement, without creating constitutional issues.

Some here may recognize the "single point of contact" proposal, as it currently exists in the FirstNet framework. This is a model I'm looking to apply to tech platforms so Federal, State, and local law enforcement have clarity on who to reach out to at these companies in order to tackle harms online.

Given the connection today's Democratic bills have on privacy and data security, I know my friend, the Chair, will appreciate me once again emphasizing the importance of passing a national privacy and data security law. Even the House Administration Committee just held a hearing on a national privacy standard. We are well overdue to hold one in the Committee of jurisdiction.

Madam Chair, I know these issues are important to you, and the best way to protect our constituents online is through a national privacy and data security framework. It is time our subcommittee moves beyond these "one-off" bills that beat around the edges of privacy and data security concerns. Leader Rodgers and I remain fully committed to working across the aisle

with anyone to enact a comprehensive privacy and data security law, and I urge my colleagues to join me in these efforts.

Thank you to everyone participating today, and I look forward to the discussion, especially how these proposals will help protect our kids online.

I yield back.