



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
CONNECTICUT

WILLIAM TONG  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

March 24, 2021

**Via First Email**

Honorable Frank Pallone, Chair  
Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Ranking Member  
House Energy and Commerce Committee

Honorable Michael F. Doyle, Chair  
Honorable Robert E. Latta, Ranking Member  
Communications and Technology Subcommittee

Honorable Janice Schakowsky, Chair  
Honorable Gus Bilirakis, Ranking Member  
Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee

Re: *Vaccine Disinformation*

Dear Representatives Pallone, McMorris Rodgers, Doyle, Latta, Schakowsky and Bilirakis,

As attorneys general responsible for safeguarding the well-being of residents and consumers in our states, we are concerned about the role of social media platforms in enabling the spread of vaccine misinformation that threatens the health and safety of our communities. In advance of your March 25 hearing on online mis- and disinformation, we are sharing a letter that we have sent to Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, calling on them to remove coronavirus vaccine misinformation from their platforms.

During the hearing, we encourage you to hold Mr. Dorsey and Mr. Zuckerberg accountable for enforcing the policies against coronavirus vaccine misinformation that each of their companies has established, by posing two simple questions: “Will you enforce your policies?” and, “Will you do so within 48 hours?” Currently, as our enclosed letter shows, they have done a poor job of implementing these policies and are allowing prominent purveyors of vaccine disinformation to continue to operate on their platforms. Mr. Dorsey’s and Mr. Zuckerberg’s cooperation in removing this content will protect vulnerable Americans and hasten our recovery from the pandemic.

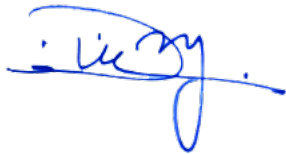
We commend your oversight work on this important issue.

165 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

*An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer*

Representatives Pallone, McMorris Rodgers, Doyle, Latta, Schakowsky and Bilirakis  
March 24, 2021  
Page | 2

Sincerely,



WILLIAM TONG  
Attorney General of Connecticut



KATHLEEN JENNINGS  
Attorney General of Delaware



TOM MILLER  
Attorney General of Iowa



MAURA HEALY  
Attorney General of Massachusetts



DANA NESSEL  
Attorney General of Michigan



KEITH ELLISON  
Attorney General of Minnesota



LETTA JAMES  
Attorney General of New York



JOSHUA STEIN  
Attorney General of North Carolina



ELLEN F. ROSENBLUM  
Attorney General of Oregon

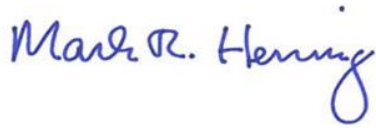


JOSH SHAPIRO  
Attorney General of Pennsylvania



PETER NERONHA  
Attorney General of Rhode Island

Representatives Pallone, McMorris Rodgers, Doyle, Latta, Schakowsky and Bilirakis  
March 24, 2021  
Page | 4

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark R. Herring". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Herring".

MARK HERRING  
Attorney General of Virginia



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
CONNECTICUT

WILLIAM TONG  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

March 24, 2021

***Via First Class and Electronic Mail***

Jack Dorsey  
Chief Executive Officer  
Twitter, Inc.  
1355 Market St.  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Mark Zuckerberg  
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer  
Facebook, Inc.  
1 Hacker Way  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Re: Vaccine Disinformation

Dear Messrs. Dorsey and Zuckerberg:

As Attorneys General committed to protecting the safety and well-being of the residents of our states, we write to express our concern about the use of your platforms to spread fraudulent information about coronavirus vaccines and to seek your cooperation in curtailing the dissemination of such information. The people and groups spreading falsehoods and misleading Americans about the safety of coronavirus vaccines are threatening the health of our communities, slowing progress in getting our residents protected from the virus, and undermining economic recovery in our states.

As safe and effective vaccines become available, the end of this pandemic is in sight. This end, however, depends on the widespread acceptance of these vaccines as safe and effective. Unfortunately, misinformation disseminated via your platforms has increased vaccine hesitancy, which will slow economic recovery and, more importantly, ultimately cause even more unnecessary deaths. A small group of individuals use your platforms to downplay the dangers of COVID-19 and spread misinformation about the safety of vaccines. These individuals lack medical expertise and are often motivated by financial interests. According to a recent report by the Center for Countering Digital Hate<sup>1</sup>, so-called “anti-vaxxer” accounts on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter reach more than 59 million followers. “Anti-vaxxers” are using social media platforms to target people of color and Black Americans specifically, members of communities who have suffered the worst health impacts of the virus and whose vaccination rates are lagging.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Center for Countering Digital Hate \(counterhate.com\)](https://www.counterhate.com/)

165 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

*An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer*

Jack Dorsey, CEO, Twitter  
Mark Zuckerberg, Chairman & CEO, Facebook  
March 24, 2021  
Page | 2


Given “anti-vaxxers” reliance on your platforms, you are uniquely positioned to prevent the spread of misinformation about coronavirus vaccines that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of millions of Americans in our states and that will prolong our road to recovery.

The updated community guidelines you have established to prevent the spread of vaccine misinformation appear to be a step in the right direction. However, it is apparent that Facebook has not taken sufficient action to identify violations and enforce these guidelines by removing and labelling misinformation and banning repeat offenders. As a result, anti-vaccine misinformation continues to spread on your platforms, in violation of your community standards.

- Twitter and Facebook have yet to remove from all their platforms the accounts of prominent “anti-vaxxers” who have repeatedly violated the companies’ terms of service. Digital media research groups estimate that as of March 10, 12 “anti-vaxxers” personal accounts and their associated organizations, groups and websites are responsible for 65% of public anti-vaccine content on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
- Facebook has failed to consistently apply misinformation labels and popups on Facebook pages and groups that discuss vaccines or COVID-19. For example, the company neglected to apply warning labels on dozens of Facebook groups that “anti-vaxxer” Larry Cook created for his followers. At the same time, the company has mistakenly flagged pro-vaccine pages and content in ways that have undermined pro-vaccine public education efforts.
- Facebook has allowed anti-vaxxers to skirt its policy of removing misinformation that health experts have debunked, by failing to prevent them from using video and streaming tools like Facebook Live and sites like Bitchute, Rumble, and Brighteon to evade detection.

We call on you to take immediate steps to fully enforce your companies’ guidelines against vaccine misinformation. By effectively rooting out fraudulent information about coronavirus vaccines, you can prevent needless illness and death and hasten our road to recovery.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM TONG  
Attorney General of Connecticut

Jack Dorsey, CEO, Twitter  
Mark Zuckerberg, Chairman & CEO, Facebook  
March 24, 2021  
Page | 3

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Jennings". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

KATHLEEN JENNINGS  
Attorney General of Delaware

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T".

TOM MILLER  
Attorney General of Iowa

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maura Healy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

MAURA HEALY  
Attorney General of Massachusetts

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Nessel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

DANA NESSEL  
Attorney General of Michigan

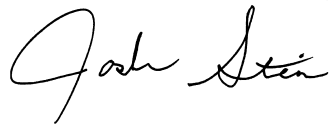
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keith Ellison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

KEITH ELLISON  
Attorney General of Minnesota

Jack Dorsey, CEO, Twitter  
Mark Zuckerberg, Chairman & CEO, Facebook  
March 24, 2021  
Page | 4



LETTIA JAMES  
Attorney General of New York



JOSHUA STEIN  
Attorney General of North Carolina



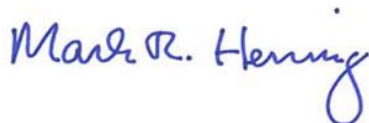
ELLEN F. ROSENBLUM  
Attorney General of Oregon



JOSH SHAPIRO  
Attorney General of Pennsylvania



PETER NERONHA  
Attorney General of Rhode Island



MARK HERRING  
Attorney General of Virginia