

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 15, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20502

Dear President Trump:

We write to support your administration's efforts to restrict TikTok and other social media sites linked to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from accessing U.S. markets. These popular apps' data collection practices, coupled with China's onerous cyber security laws requiring all companies operating in China, including TikTok's parent company, ByteDance, to share user data with CCP authorities, present a very real threat to U.S. national security. As such, we urge your administration to take decisive action to protect the American people's privacy and safety.

In June, India took the extraordinary step of banning 60 Chinese-affiliated mobile apps, including TikTok, due to national security concerns. However, the CCP's systemic campaign to collect and illicitly transmit user data for the Chinese government's purposes is not unique to Indian consumers. In fact, Chinese authorities currently enjoy relatively unrestricted access to U.S. consumer and government data through the country's advanced data mining policies. As evidence, TikTok's privacy policy for U.S. residents is upfront about the vast quantity of user data it collects and shares with the CCP:

“We automatically collect certain information from you when you use the Platform, including internet or other network activity information such as your IP address, geolocation-related data..., unique device identifiers, browser and search history (including content you have viewed in the Platform), and Cookies.”

Additionally, the company's privacy policy notes that it “also collect[s] information you share with [TikTok] from third-party social network providers, and technical and behavioral information about your use of the Platform.”¹ As U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently stated, Americans should only use this app, “if you want your private information in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party.”

¹ <https://www.tiktok.com/legal/privacy-policy?lang=en#privacy-us>

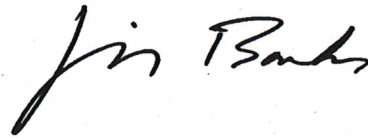
Furthermore, TikTok's censorship of user content to advance the CCP's foreign policy aims is deeply concerning. Leaked documents² detail instructions to ban videos on the app that mention Tiananmen Square, Tibetan independence, or banned religious groups. Moreover, an Australian Strategic Policy Institute report recently found that ByteDance works closely with the Chinese government to enable human rights abuses against Uighur Muslims³ by disseminating the CCP's state propaganda. ByteDance is also required under Chinese law to provide seats on the company's board of directors to CCP officials, further cementing the authoritarian government's role in setting these policies.

It is clear that the United States should not trust TikTok or any other Chinese-affiliated social media websites or apps to protect Americans' data, privacy, or security. As such, we urge you to take strong action to stop the CCP's sophisticated espionage campaign against our country and protect our national security. Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ken Buck
Member of Congress



Jim Banks
Member of Congress



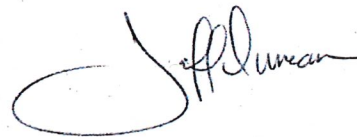
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Ted Budd
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Rick Crawford
Member of Congress



Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress

² <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/sep/25/revealed-how-tiktok-censors-videos-that-do-not-please-beijing>

³ <https://www.businessinsider.com/tiktok-parent-company-bytedance-spreads-chinese-propaganda-report-2019->



Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
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Matt Gaetz
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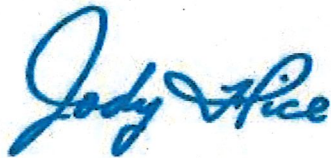
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