

United States Senate

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
JUDICIARY
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

November 22, 2021

Susan Wojcicki
Chief Operating Officer
YouTube
901 Cherry Avenue
San Bruno, CA 94066

Dear Ms. Wojcicki,

I was taken aback to read a recent report¹ about YouTube demonetizing a November 18 video from “Breaking Points with Krystal and Saagar,” an online news program. This program shared the story of Peng Shuai, a Chinese tennis star who posted on social media her allegations that she was raped by a senior official in the Chinese Communist Party. After making her allegations public, Shuai disappeared from social media and had not been heard from in weeks. More, according to the news program, Shuai’s post was removed from social media within 30 minutes and related content from Chinese citizens is being taken down. Further, Chinese state media released a statement it alleged was from Peng, which recanted her accusations and said she was resting at home.²

This is extremely concerning. Despite the CCP’s history of human rights violations and “disappearing” its own citizens, YouTube chose to demonetize the video. According to YouTube, “it isn’t suitable for all advertisers,” and “will continue to run limited or no ads.” It apparently is not enough that YouTube takes steps to censor American citizens. Now it is working with the CCP to promote its dangerous viewpoints around the world. I understand that the creators of the news program appealed YouTube’s decision, but it was upheld by your content reviewers.

No later than November 30, 2021, I ask that you respond to the following questions:

1. Why did YouTube demonetize the news program referenced above? Which of your content moderation criteria did it violate?
2. Did you remove this content at the behest of the Chinese Communist Party?
3. Please identify all other instances, if any, when YouTube has demonetized, blocked, or deleted content at the behest of the Chinese Communist Party.

¹ Santi Ruiz, “YouTube Strips Ad Revenue from Channel for Video on Disappeared Tennis Star,” Washington Free Beacon (Nov. 19, 2021), <https://freebeacon.com/media/youtube-strips-ad-revenue-from-channel-for-video-on-disappeared-chinese-tennis-star/>.

² ESPN News Services, “China State Media Release Attributed to Peng Shuai Raises WTA Concerns,” Nov. 17, 2021, https://www.espn.com/tennis/story/_/id/32656779/china-state-media-release-attributed-peng-shuai-raises-wta-concerns.

I appreciate your attention to these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marsha Blackburn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator