

November 14, 2023

Mark Zuckerberg
Founder, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer
Meta Platforms, Inc.
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg:

We write seeking documents regarding Meta’s research into, knowledge of, and response to the mental and physical health harms associated with its products, including Facebook and Instagram.

Members of Congress have repeatedly asked Meta for information on its awareness of threats to young people on its platforms and the measures that it has taken, only to be stonewalled and provided non-responsive or misleading information. For example, in response to a question about teen mental health at a March 2021 House Committee on Energy and Commerce hearing, you testified that “overall, the research that we have seen is that using social apps to connect with other people can have positive mental health benefits and well-being benefits.”¹ In a response to a letter sent in August 2021, when asked a direct question about whether “Facebook’s research ever found that its platforms and products can have a negative effect on children’s and teens’ mental health or well-being,”² Facebook responded “we are not aware of a consensus among studies or experts about how much screen time is ‘too much.’”³

Meta’s representations to the public and in response to Congressional inquiries concealed and misrepresented its extensive knowledge about the threats to young people on its platforms. Whistleblower documents provided to Congress in September 2021 directly contradicted your testimony, finding that a significant amount of teens on Facebook and Instagram “have an addicts’ narrative about their use,” “have only ‘a little control’ or ‘no control at all’ over how Instagram makes them feel,” and attribute to it suicidal ideation and body image concerns.⁴ Despite these documented disclosures, Meta executives continued to downplay possible harms to young people in Senate hearings and inquiries.

¹ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology and Consumer Protection, Hearing on Misinformation and Disinformation on Online Platforms, 117th Cong., 1st sess., 2021.

² Sens. Blumenthal and Blackburn. Letter to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg. “Internal Research on Children’s Mental Health,” August 4, 2021.

³ Facebook, Response to Sens. Blumenthal and Blackburn. August 17, 2021.

⁴ Facebook, “Teen Mental Health Deep Dive.” October 2021.

We are troubled by recent disclosures that shed further light on Meta’s knowledge of the harms its products cause teens and its unwillingness to take appropriate steps to prevent and mitigate these harms. Last Tuesday, former Facebook executive Arturo Béjar testified before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law about his efforts to inform you and other senior executives at Meta of the dangerous and harmful experiences of teenagers on Instagram based on data collected by its internal researchers. As a result of Mr. Béjar’s efforts, Meta executives — including you, Sheryl Sandberg, Meta CTO Chris Cox, and Head of Instagram Adam Mosseri — knew that over half of Instagram users report having one bad or harmful experience each week, including a quarter of young teens reporting having received unwanted sexual advances. Rather than act on these stunning findings, Meta hid this information from the public and Congressional oversight while providing misleading statistics, ignoring recommendations to protect teens, and even rolling back safety tools.

Mr. Béjar’s testimony and documents were corroborated by newly unsealed allegations in a lawsuit filed by the Massachusetts Attorney General. According to the complaint, the mental health risks of Facebook and Instagram were well-known within Meta. However, executives are alleged to have repeatedly made decisions to implement changes to a product that they knew would harm teens and shelved safeguards based on concerns about their impact on revenue. In one exchange, you are alleged to have personally vetoed a proposal to “disallow effects that mimic plastic surgery” that had significant support from Meta’s senior management and outside experts, despite a clear warning from Instagram’s Head of Policy that Meta would be “actively encouraging young girls into body dysmorphia.”⁵ Additionally, while executives themselves acknowledged “wellbeing work is both understaffed and fragmented,” “currently underinvested,” and that Meta had been talking “about this for a long time but ha[d] made little progress,”⁶ proposals to fund wellbeing work were denied, and safety staff has been subsequently cut from Meta. It now seems clear that the root of Meta’s repeated failure to act to enhance the safety of its products starts at the top.

Given Meta’s apparent willful disregard for, and profiting from threats to, the safety and wellbeing of young people, as well as its misrepresentations to Congress, we write to request the following documents concerning your and other senior executives’ consideration of the requests for additional safety investments and tools detailed in Mr. Béjar’s testimony and in the complaint filed by the Massachusetts Attorney General. Please provide the following documents no later than November 30, 2023.

1. All communications related to Arturo Béjar’s October 5, 2021 email to Mark Zuckerberg, Sheryl Sandberg, Chris Cox, and Adam Mosseri, including:
 - a. All responses to and forwards of Arturo Béjar’s email;

⁵ Quoted in *Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Meta Platforms, Inc. and Instagram, LLC* (amended November 6, 2023), ¶ 223-239.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ¶ 179-195.

- b. All communication between executives regarding Arturo Béjar’s email; and
 - c. All communication between executives and other Meta personnel regarding Arturo Béjar’s email.
2. All communications related to Arturo Béjar’s October 14, 2021, email to Adam Mosseri, including:
 - a. All responses to and forwards of Arturo Béjar’s email;
 - b. All communication between Meta executives regarding Arturo Béjar’s email; and
 - c. All communication between executives and other Meta personnel regarding Arturo Béjar’s email.
3. All correspondence related to David Ginsberg’s April 2019 email to Mark Zuckerberg recommending investments to fund additional engineering staff focused on building well-being tools, including:
 - a. Mr. Ginsburg’s email to Mark Zuckerberg and Susan Li’s response referenced in paragraph 181 of the Massachusetts Attorney General’s complaint;
 - b. All communication between executives regarding Mr. Ginsburg’s email; and
 - c. All communication between Meta executives and other Meta personnel regarding Mr. Ginsburg’s email.
4. All correspondence related to the August 2021 outreach from members of Instagram’s Well-Being Team to Nick Clegg and Chris Norton, recommending additional investment and staffing to address “‘currently underinvested’ teen well-being areas,” as cited in paragraphs 181-193 of the Massachusetts Attorney General’s complaint, including:
 - a. The Well-Being Team’s initial outreach to Mr. Norton and Mr. Clegg;
 - b. Mr. Clegg’s forwarding of messages from the Well-Being Team to Mark Zuckerberg and Mr. Clegg’s November 2021 follow-up email to Mr. Zuckerberg;
 - c. All correspondence involving Mr. Zuckerberg and Meta CFO Susan Li concerning the outreach from the Well-Being team;
 - d. All correspondence between Pratiti Raychoudhury, Adam Mosseri, Emily Dalton Smith and Kang-Xing Jin concerning the request; and
 - e. All other correspondence between Meta executives regarding the Well-Being team’s request.

5. Any documents, memoranda, analyses, or presentations prepared by or for, or shared with, Mark Zuckerberg, Sheryl Sandberg, Chris Cox, Adam Mosseri, Nick Clegg, and Chris Norton concerning the emails and outreach referenced in questions 1 through 4.
6. A list of any meetings convened to discuss the emails and outreach referenced in questions 1 through 4, specifying when the meetings took place and who attended, along with a copy of any agendas, summaries, or minutes of those meetings.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate




Marsha Blackburn
United States Senate



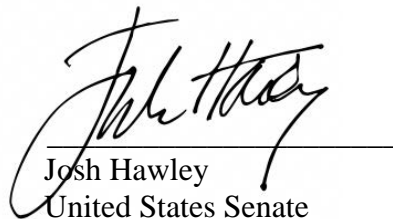
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate



Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senate



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate



Josh Hawley
United States Senate