

United States Senate

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

July 16, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION:

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

I write regarding White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki's recent remarks about the White House's oversight of social media posts it considers problematic or "disinformation." Ms. Psaki noted that the White House is "in regular touch with the social media platforms" and is "flagging problematic posts" that they believe should be removed relating to COVID-19 and the COVID vaccine. Ms. Psaki also suggested that Americans who are banned from one social media platform should be banned on others.

These revelations are deeply concerning. The blatant actions by your administration to work with big tech companies to censor Americans' free speech are shocking – and arguably a violation of the First Amendment. Communist countries such as Cuba are currently taking away their citizens' right to use the internet to communicate; the U.S. government should be standing up to, not looking to mirror, authoritarian regimes such as these.

Please provide more information about your Administration's efforts to "flag problematic posts" on social media platforms, including:

- 1) What criteria are you directing social media platforms to use to flag and remove posts?
- 2) What criteria are you directing social media platforms to use to ban users?
- 3) In your July 15th press briefing, you stated that 12 people are responsible for "65 percent of anti-vaccine misinformation on social media platforms." Who are those accounts and have they, or others, been removed at your direction?
- 4) What is the legal basis for your Administration's decision to direct social media platforms to flag and remove posts from their sites?
- 5) Does the White House have staff dedicated to searching social media for content to flag for removal?

Additionally, I request a briefing on this issue by August 2, 2021. I appreciate your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator