

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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December 15, 2020

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

On October 15, 2020, we requested you hold an emergency hearing on Big Tech’s repeated efforts to interfere in the 2020 election.¹ At that time—just days before the November 3, 2020 presidential election—Facebook and Twitter censored a news article about Joe Biden’s son, Hunter Biden, regarding his Ukrainian business dealings while his father was Vice President.² These Big Tech companies both limited and/or denied distribution of the *New York Post*’s report, and Twitter locked the *New York Post*’s account.³

Last week, both Hunter Biden and the Biden-Harris Transition Team acknowledged Hunter Biden is under federal investigation for his “tax affairs.”⁴ Reporting indicates this investigation is related to his overseas business dealings.⁵ In light of Hunter Biden’s admission that he is under investigation, especially after Big Tech’s unjustifiable censorship of the *New York Post*’s report, we are renewing our hearing request. Big Tech’s silencing of viewpoints and censorship of news undermines our electoral process, our institutions, and our U.S. Constitution.

As we explained in our October 15 letter, shortly after the *New York Post* posted its story on Facebook the company “reduc[ed] its distribution” in an apparent attempt to limit access to the story.⁶ Just as concerning, Facebook reportedly refused to answer basic questions about its

¹ Letter from Hon. James Comer, et al. to Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Chair., H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, Oct. 15, 2020.

² Paul Conner, *Facebook reducing distribution of Hunter Biden story in New York Post*, FOX BUS., Oct. 14, 2020, available at <https://www.foxbusiness.com/technology/facebook-reducing-distribution-of-hunter-biden-story-in-new-york-post>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Statements by Hunter Biden and the Biden-Harris Transition Team, Dec. 9, 2020, available at <https://buildbackbetter.gov/press-releases/statements-by-hunter-biden-and-the-biden-harris-transition-team/>.

⁵ Evan Perez and Pamela Brown, *Federal criminal investigation into Hunter Biden focuses on his business dealings in China*, CNN, Dec. 10, 2020, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/09/politics/hunter-biden-tax-investigation/index.html>.

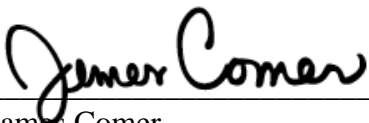
⁶ Noah Manskar, *Facebook limits spread of The Post’s Hunter Biden expose*, N.Y. POST, Oct. 14, 2020, available at <https://nypost.com/2020/10/14/facebook-limits-spread-of-the-posts-hunter-biden-expose/>.

decision.⁷ Twitter also censored the article and warned users that it is “potentially spammy or unsafe,” and locked the *New York Post*’s Twitter account.⁸

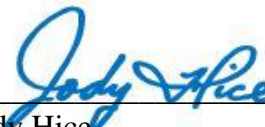
As Hunter Biden admitted last week, he is under federal investigation regarding his taxes, potentially related in part to the very matters the *New York Post* reported, yet for which it was censored. Indeed, additional reporting from NBC News refers to a 2017 email to Hunter Biden regarding his income from Burisma and “need to amend” Biden’s 2014 tax returns to reflect the “unreported” income.⁹ An NBC spokesperson did not dispute the authenticity of the email, which came from a laptop dropped off at a computer hardware store in Delaware—the same laptop and same computer hardware store discussed in the *New York Post*’s October 14 article censored by Big Tech for being “potentially spammy or unsafe.” Big Tech’s effort to selectively limit speech based on political affiliation is a disturbing pattern of censorship in our nation—a nation that holds out the First Amendment’s right to freedom of speech and freedom of the press as two of our most paramount freedoms.

As Big Tech platforms continue to limit speech based on political ideology, we must immediately hold a hearing to learn who are responsible for making these decisions and what policies enable Big Tech to selectively limit and/or censor speech on social media. We reiterate our request the Committee hold an emergency hearing on this important matter as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform



Jody Hice
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government
Operations



Glenn S. Grothman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security

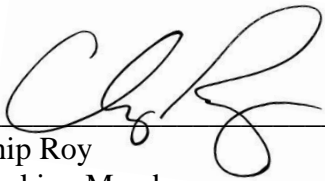


Michael Cloud
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic and
Consumer Policy

⁷ Michael Lee, ‘Digital civil war’: *N.Y. Post* editor speaks out after Twitter suppresses Hunter Biden-Burisma story, WASH. EXAM. Oct. 14, 2020, available at <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/digital-civil-war-new-york-post-editor-speaks-out-after-twitter-suppresses-hunter-biden-burisma-story>.

⁸ *Id.*

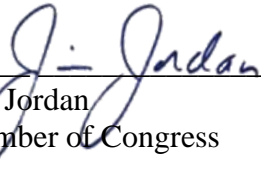
⁹ Tom Winter, *Email to Hunter Biden raises fresh questions about his tax dealings*, NBC NEWS, Dec. 11, 2020, available at <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/email-hunter-biden-raises-fresh-questions-about-his-tax-dealings-n1250973>.



Chip Roy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and
Civil Liberties



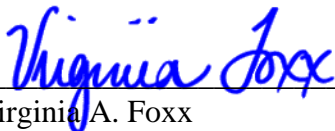
Mark E. Green, M.D.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment



Jim Jordan
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Virginia A. Foxx
Member of Congress



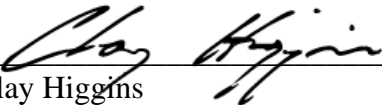
Thomas H. Massie
Member of Congress



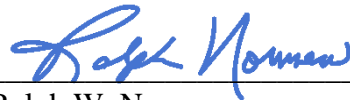
Gary Palmer
Member of Congress




Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



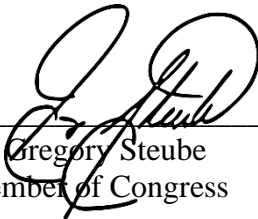
Ralph W. Norman
Member of Congress



Carol D. Miller
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Fred B. Keller
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Chairman
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

The Honorable Harley E. Rouda, Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment