

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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October 22, 2025

Dr. Jeff Hancock
Director
Stanford Cyber Policy Center
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
616 Jane Stanford Way
Stanford, CA 94305-6165

Dear Dr. Hancock:

The Committee on the Judiciary is conducting oversight of how and to what extent foreign laws, regulations, and judicial orders compel, coerce, or influence companies to censor speech in the United States.¹ In the 118th Congress, the Committee uncovered how the Biden-Harris Administration repeatedly pressured online platforms to censor Americans directly and by proxy, including through partnership with Stanford University.² Following this oversight, Meta and Alphabet both admitted that it was wrong to bow to the Biden-Harris Administration's censorship demands, publicly committed to restoring free speech on their platforms, and reformed their policies.³ Now, a new threat to Americans' free expression has emerged in the form of foreign laws, regulations, and judicial orders that require or coerce American companies to limit what content can be viewed on their platforms in the United States.⁴ To protect

¹ See, e.g., STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 119TH CONG., THE FOREIGN CENSORSHIP THREAT: HOW THE EUROPEAN UNION'S DIGITAL SERVICES ACT COMPELS GLOBAL CENSORSHIP AND INFRINGES ON AMERICAN FREE SPEECH (Comm. Print July 25, 2025); Press Release, H. Comm. on the Judiciary, Chairman Jordan Subpoenas Big Tech for Information on Foreign Censorship of American Speech (Feb. 26, 2025).

² STAFF OF THE SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV'T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 118TH CONG., THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (Comm. Print Dec. 20, 2024).

³ Letter from Mark Zuckerberg, CEO, Meta, to Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman, H. Comm. on the Judiciary (Aug. 26, 2024) (noting that "senior officials from the Biden Administration, including the White House, repeatedly pressured" Meta "to censor certain COVID-19 content, including humor and satire"); Mark Zuckerberg, *More Speech and Fewer Mistakes*, META (Jan. 7, 2025) (noting that "it's been so difficult" to counter global censorship abroad when the Biden-Harris Administration "has pushed for censorship" and gone after Meta "and other American companies" at home, "embolden[ing] other governments to go even further"); Letter from Dan Donovan, Counsel, Alphabet, to Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman, H. Comm. on the Judiciary (Sept. 23, 2025) (noting that, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, "Biden Administration officials continued to press [Alphabet] to remove non-violative user-generated content").

⁴ See, e.g., Steven Lee Myers, *E.U. Law Sets the Stage for a Clash Over Disinformation*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 27, 2023) ("The law, the Digital Services Act, is intended to force social media giants to adopt new policies and practices If the measure is successful, as officials and experts hope, its effects could extend far beyond Europe, changing company policies in the United States and elsewhere.").

Americans' civil liberties, the Committee must investigate the extent and nature of these foreign censorship efforts and their effect on constitutionally protected speech at home. We write to request documents relating to Stanford University's cooperation and coordination with foreign governments seeking to censor American speech.

Foreign censorship laws, regulations, enforcement actions, and judicial orders may have the effect of limiting Americans' ability to access constitutionally protected speech in the United States.⁵ In fact, this seems to be the intended effect of many foreign censorship efforts.⁶ The Committee has already uncovered how censorship laws like the European Union's (EU) Digital Services Act are content-focused and have extraterritorial effects.⁷ These laws set *de facto* global censorship standards by coercing social media platforms to change their content moderation policies.⁸ These policies are generally global in scope, as platforms cannot effectively enforce country-specific content moderation policies while respecting user privacy.⁹ Other jurisdictions, including Australia and Brazil, have issued direct orders to social media platforms to globally remove specific content.¹⁰

These government censors do not act alone, however. The Committee's oversight has shown that foreign governments regularly consult with and rely on third-party organizations as they develop and implement their censorship laws and regulations.¹¹ The Committee is concerned that Stanford, and specifically its Cyber Policy Center, may be one of the third parties engaged in assisting foreign governments attempting to suppress American speech. A document

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*; see also Thierry Breton (@ThierryBreton), X (Aug. 12, 2024, 12:25 PM), <https://x.com/ThierryBreton/status/1823033048109367549> (Letter from then-EU Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton to Elon Musk, owner of X, stating that under the DSA, EU regulators are empowered to stop "spillovers" of U.S. speech into the EU).

⁷ STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 119TH CONG., THE FOREIGN CENSORSHIP THREAT: HOW THE EUROPEAN UNION'S DIGITAL SERVICES ACT COMPELS GLOBAL CENSORSHIP AND INFRINGES ON AMERICAN FREE SPEECH (Comm. Print July, 25, 2025).

⁸ See, e.g., Dawn Carla Nunziato, *The Digital Services Act and the Brussels Effect on Platform Content Moderation*, 24 CHIC. J. INT. LAW 115, 122 (2023). ("In short, the DSA's substantive content moderation and notice and take down provisions will likely incentivize the platforms to remove large swaths of content . . . And the platforms will likely alter their globally applicable terms of service and content moderation guidelines in response to the DSA's mandates in ways that will be speech-restrictive worldwide.").

⁹ STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 119TH CONG., THE FOREIGN CENSORSHIP THREAT: HOW THE EUROPEAN UNION'S DIGITAL SERVICES ACT COMPELS GLOBAL CENSORSHIP AND INFRINGES ON AMERICAN FREE SPEECH at 31-32 (Comm. Print July 25, 2025).

¹⁰ Letter from Australia's eSafety Commission requiring X to take down content worldwide because it can be accessed via VPN (Apr. 18, 2024) (on file with Comm.); Tom Crowley, *'Silly' to demand global takedowns: Dutton weighs in on eSafety case*, AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORP. (Apr. 25, 2024); STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND THE SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV'T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 118TH CONG., THE ATTACK ON FREE SPEECH ABROAD AND THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S SILENCE: THE CASE OF BRAZIL (Comm. Print Apr. 17, 2024); STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND THE SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV'T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 118TH CONG., THE ATTACK ON FREE SPEECH ABROAD AND THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S SILENCE: THE CASE OF BRAZIL, PART II (Comm. Print May 7, 2024).

¹¹ STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 119TH CONG., THE FOREIGN CENSORSHIP THREAT: HOW THE EUROPEAN UNION'S DIGITAL SERVICES ACT COMPELS GLOBAL CENSORSHIP AND INFRINGES ON AMERICAN FREE SPEECH at 20-22, 29 (Comm. Print July 25, 2025).

recently produced to the Committee details a September 24, 2025, event hosted by the Stanford Cyber Policy Center titled “Compliance and Enforcement in a Rapidly Evolving Landscape.”¹² The ostensible purpose of the event was to “bring[] together policymakers, academics, and experienced Silicon Valley experts to discuss the state of compliance and enforcement of existing regulations related to online trust and safety.”¹³ You were listed as one of the organizers and hosts of this gathering of misinformation pseudo-scientists and censorious foreign officials.¹⁴

Despite its benign title and purpose, this roundtable brought together foreign officials who have directly targeted American speech and represent a serious threat to the First Amendment.¹⁵ The keynote speaker at this event was Julie Inman-Grant, the Australian eSafety Commissioner who has explicitly argued that governments have the authority to demand and enforce *global* takedowns of content.¹⁶ Other attendees and panelists included officials from some of the entities with the worst track records of extraterritorial censorship, including the United Kingdom’s (UK) Ofcom, the EU, and Brazil.¹⁷ By hosting this event, designed to encourage and facilitate censorship compliance with regulators from Australia, Brazil, the EU, and the UK, Stanford is working with foreign censorship officials to vitiate the First Amendment.

This collaboration with foreign censorship officials is even more alarming in light of Stanford’s past efforts to facilitate domestic government censorship of lawful speech. As the Committee found in the 118th Congress, the Stanford Internet Observatory, an entity for which

¹² Compliance and Enforcement in a Rapidly Evolving Landscape Agenda and Attendee List (Sept. 24, 2025) (on file with Comm.).

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ See generally Christopher Ingraham, *Judge rebukes Stanford misinformation expert for using ChatGPT to draft testimony*, MINNESOTA REFORMER (Jan. 14, 2025) (“A federal district judge issued a harsh rebuke and tossed out the testimony of a Stanford misinformation expert who submitted a court document, under penalty of perjury, containing misinformation in a Minnesota election law case.”); Christopher Ingraham, *Misinformation expert cites non-existent sources in Minnesota deep fake case*, MINNESOTA REFORMER (Nov. 20, 2024).

¹⁵ Compliance and Enforcement in a Rapidly Evolving Landscape Agenda and Attendee List (Sep. 24, 2025) (on file with Comm.); see e.g., Tom Crowley, *‘Silly’ to demand global takedowns: Dutton weighs in on eSafety case*, AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION (Apr. 25, 2024); Letter from Australia’s eSafety Commission requiring X to take down content worldwide because it can be accessed via VPN (Apr. 18, 2024) (on file with Comm.); Rep. Jim Jordan (@Jim_Jordan), X (July 28, 2025, 10:58 AM), https://x.com/Jim_Jordan/status/1949846809238446237.

¹⁶ Compliance and Enforcement in a Rapidly Evolving Landscape Agenda and Attendee List (Sept. 24, 2025) (on file with Comm.); Letter from Australia’s eSafety Commission requiring X to take down content worldwide because it can be accessed via VPN (Apr. 18, 2024) (on file with Comm.).

¹⁷ See, e.g., STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 119TH CONG., THE FOREIGN CENSORSHIP THREAT: HOW THE EUROPEAN UNION’S DIGITAL SERVICES ACT COMPELS GLOBAL CENSORSHIP AND INFRINGES ON AMERICAN FREE SPEECH (Comm. Print July 25, 2025); STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND THE SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV’T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 118TH CONG., THE ATTACK ON FREE SPEECH ABROAD AND THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION’S SILENCE: THE CASE OF BRAZIL (Comm. Print Apr. 17, 2024); STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND THE SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV’T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 118TH CONG., THE ATTACK ON FREE SPEECH ABROAD AND THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION’S SILENCE: THE CASE OF BRAZIL, PART II (Comm. Print May 7, 2024); Rep. Jim Jordan (@Jim_Jordan), X (July 28, 2025, 10:58 AM), https://x.com/Jim_Jordan/status/1949846809238446237; Rep. Jim Jordan (@Jim_Jordan), X (July 29, 2025, 9:30 PM), https://x.com/Jim_Jordan/status/1950368307372020086.

you were the faculty director,¹⁸ led the Election Integrity Partnership's efforts to launder government censorship requests to social media platforms, enabling officials at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and the State Department to covertly silence voices they disapproved of to influence the 2020 election.¹⁹ Not only did Stanford participate in this domestic conspiracy against Americans' First Amendment rights, but it also attempted to cover up the scheme when the university's counsel made misrepresentations to the Committee and threatened Committee staff.²⁰ It seems that Stanford is once more attempting to covertly undermine the First Amendment rights of Americans by collaborating with foreign government officials.

In contrast to Stanford, which is facilitating foreign censorship that harms American civil liberties, many American companies are sounding the alarm. X has pushed back against lawless judicial orders in Brazil and Australia mandating global content takedowns.²¹ Likewise, Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, emphasized the need to "push back on governments around the world going after American companies and pushing to censor more," something it acknowledged requires "the support of the U.S. government."²² Alphabet recently stated to the Committee that European censorship laws "place a disproportionate regulatory burden on American companies," and risk free expression "within and outside of the European Union," including by requiring platforms "to remove lawful content."²³

Congress has an important interest in protecting and advancing fundamental free speech principles. To develop effective legislation to combat foreign governments' ability to coerce American technology companies to change content moderation policies and practices, resulting in the censorship of American speech, the Committee must first understand how and to what extent foreign governments have coerced and colluded with companies and other intermediaries to censor and control speech. To assist the Committee in its oversight, we ask that you please provide the following documents and information:

¹⁸ Naomi Nix and Joseph Menn, *These academics studied falsehoods spread by Trump. Now the GOP wants answers*, WASH. POST (June 6, 2023).

¹⁹ STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND THE SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV'T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, THE WEAPONIZATION OF "DISINFORMATION" PSEUDO-EXPERTS AND BUREAUCRATS: HOW THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERED WITH UNIVERSITIES TO CENSOR AMERICANS' FREE SPEECH (Comm. Print Nov. 6, 2023); *see also* STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND THE SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV'T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, THE WEAPONIZATION OF CISA: HOW A "CYBERSECURITY" AGENCY COLLUDED WITH BIG TECH AND "DISINFORMATION" PARTNERS TO CENSOR AMERICANS (Comm. Print June 26, 2023).

²⁰ STAFF OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND THE SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV'T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, THE WEAPONIZATION OF "DISINFORMATION" PSEUDO-EXPERTS AND BUREAUCRATS: HOW THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERED WITH UNIVERSITIES TO CENSOR AMERICANS' FREE SPEECH at 84-92 (Comm. Print Nov. 6, 2023).

²¹ *See, e.g.*, X Global Government Affairs (@GlobalAffairs), X (Aug. 29, 2024, 7:14 PM), <https://x.com/GlobalAffairs/status/1829296715989414281>; X Global Government Affairs (@GlobalAffairs), X (Apr. 19, 2024, 11:20 AM), <https://x.com/GlobalAffairs/status/1781342060668174707>.

²² Mark Zuckerberg, *More Speech and Fewer Mistakes*, META (Jan. 7, 2025).

²³ Letter from Dan Donovan, Counsel, Alphabet, to Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman, H. Comm. on the Judiciary (Sept. 23, 2025).

1. All documents and communications referring or relating to the September 24, 2025, “Compliance and Enforcement in a Rapidly Evolving Landscape” event, including but not limited to:
 - a. All such documents and communications between or among Stanford and any foreign government, including Australia, Brazil, the European Union and its member countries, or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
 - b. All such documents and communications between or among Stanford and any third parties; and
 - c. All such internal documents and communications between or among Stanford personnel.
2. All documents and communications between or among Stanford and any foreign government, from January 1, 2020, to present, referring or relating to the moderation, deletion, suppression, restriction, or reduced circulation of content on social media platforms. This request includes but is not limited to:
 - a. All such documents and communications between or among Stanford and Australia, Brazil, the European Union and its member countries, or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
3. All internal documents and communications between or among Stanford employees, from January 1, 2020, to present, referring or relating to any public or private communications or statements from the Executive Branch of the United States Government, a foreign government, or any third party referring or relating to the moderation, deletion, suppression, restriction, or reduced circulation of content on social media platforms.
4. Documents sufficient to show all funding Stanford has received since January 1, 2020, from foreign governments referring or relating to the moderation, deletion, suppression, restriction, or reduced circulation of content on social media platforms.

Please produce all documents and information as soon as possible but no later than 10:00 a.m. on November 5, 2025.

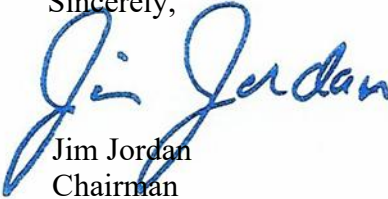
Furthermore, this letter serves as a formal request to preserve all existing and future records and materials relating to the topics addressed in this letter. You should construe this preservation notice as an instruction to take all reasonable steps to prevent the destruction or alteration, whether intentionally or negligently, of all documents, communications, and other information, including electronic information and metadata, that are or may be responsive to this congressional inquiry. This instruction includes all electronic messages sent using your official

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and personal accounts or devices, including records created using text messages, phone-based message applications, or encryption software.

Pursuant to the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on the Judiciary has jurisdiction to conduct oversight of matters concerning “civil liberties” to inform potential legislative reforms.²⁴ If you have any questions about this matter, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-6906. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jim Jordan
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member

Dr. Jonathan Levin, President, Stanford University

²⁴ Rules of the House of Representatives R. X (2025).