



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

October 2, 2020

Mr. Mark Zuckerberg  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
Facebook, Inc.  
1 Hacker Way  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg:

With the election already underway, I write to you with deep concern about the myriad of ways that social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp may continue to be used to spread disinformation targeting Black voters, or to otherwise suppress, intimidate, and interfere with Black voter turnout in 2020.

The 2016 election was a watershed moment for social media companies, as platforms were hijacked by malicious actors aiming to silence Black voters and sow racial division. Investigations revealed a sophisticated Russian plot to flood the social media accounts of American voters with inflammatory, divisive content that was—*most often*—designed to prey on racial tensions and dampen enthusiasm among Black voters.<sup>1</sup> As the bipartisan Senate Select Committee on Intelligence noted in 2018, “no single group of Americans was targeted...more than African-Americans.”<sup>2</sup>

As you know, these tactics remain in use on your platforms today, and have been employed by a wider range of countries, organizations, and individuals, including within the U.S.<sup>3</sup> Since 2016, China and Iran have entered the disinformation space, with varying motivations and sophistication

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence, *Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election – Volume 2: Russia’s Use of Social Media with Additional Views*, U.S. Senate, Oct. 2019, [https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report\\_Volume2.pdf](https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume2.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> “Black voters are being targeted in disinformation campaigns, echoing the 2016 Russian playbook,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 26, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/08/26/race-divisions-highlighted-disinformation-2016/>; “Russian election meddling is back – via Ghana and Nigeria – and in your feeds,” *CNN*, Apr. 11, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/12/world/russia-ghana-troll-farms-2020-ward/index.html>.

levels.<sup>4</sup> Further, there has been a massive surge in domestic disinformation, misinformation, and conspiracy theories spread on social media which can be repurposed by foreign actors.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Russian disinformation has not abated, with reports showing new activity by the Internet Research Agency and the operatives responsible for the “hack-and-leak” of Democratic National Committee emails in 2016.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the Kremlin appears to be outsourcing some disinformation operations to “troll farms” in Ghana and Nigeria in the hopes that African nationals will be able to more convincingly speak to American audiences about racial division in the U.S.<sup>7</sup> Content generated by these troll farms reportedly uses “a mixture of sentiments to cultivate followers and manipulate U.S. narratives about race, racial tensions and police conduct” specifically crafted to encourage distrust in Black communities.<sup>8</sup>

Four years later, the scope and persistence of such threats on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to Black Americans’ civic participation remain extremely concerning. While platforms have made some improvements when it comes to disrupting this activity, these takedowns are often spurred by tips from law enforcement or external researchers rather than surfaced through internal investigation and reporting structures.<sup>9</sup>

We have also learned more about the direct role some social media companies played in supporting the Trump campaign’s voter suppression effort. Just this week, an investigation by *Channel 4 News* shed light on how President Trump’s 2016 campaign was able to use Facebook’s data, algorithms, targeted advertising tools, and even embedded employees to try to convince 3.5 million Black Americans to “stay home” on Election Day.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Statement by William Evanina, Director of the National Counter Terrorism Center, *Election Threat Update for the American Public*, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Aug. 7, 2020, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/item/2139-statement-by-ncsc-director-william-evanina-election-threat-update-for-the-american-public>.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Richard Stengel, “Domestic Disinformation is a Greater Menace than Foreign Disinformation,” *TIME*, Jun. 26, 2020, <https://time.com/5860215/domestic-disinformation-growing-menace-america/>; Paul M. Barrett, *Tackling Domestic Disinformation: What the Social Media Companies Need to Do*, New York University Center for Business and Human Rights, Mar. 2019, [https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/NYU20Domestic20Disinformation\\_Digital20Version.pdf](https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/NYU20Domestic20Disinformation_Digital20Version.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> *August 2020 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report*, Facebook, Sep. 1, 2020, <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/09/august-2020-cib-report/>; *Removing Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior*, Facebook, Sep. 24, 2020, <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/09/removing-coordinated-inauthentic-behavior-russia/>. See also, Ben Nimmo, Camille Francois, C. Shawn Eib and Lea Ronzaud, *IRA Again: Unlucky Thirteen*, Sep. 2020, [https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphika\\_report\\_ira\\_again\\_unlucky\\_thirteen.pdf](https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphika_report_ira_again_unlucky_thirteen.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> “Russian election meddling is back – via Ghana and Nigeria – and in your feeds,” *CNN*, Apr. 11, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/12/world/russia-ghana-troll-farms-2020-ward/index.html>.

<sup>8</sup> “Russia’s disinformation campaigns are targeting African Americans,” *Washington Post*, Jul. 24, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/07/24/russias-disinformation-campaigns-are-targeting-african-americans/>.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *Removing Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior*, Sep. 24, 2020 and *August 2020 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report*, Sep. 1, 2020 (noting that Facebook “began this investigation based on information from the FBI about this network’s off-platform activity”).

<sup>10</sup> “Revealed: Trump campaign strategy to deter millions of Black Americans from voting in 2016,” *Channel 4 News*, Sep. 28, 2020, <https://www.channel4.com/news/revealed-trump-campaign-strategy-to-deter-millions-of-black-americans-from-voting-in-2016>.

Unfortunately, the continued efforts to maliciously target Black voters on your platforms raise questions about whether you, as Chief Executive Officer of Facebook, fully appreciate the range of tactics that have been used to suppress Black turnout and the many forms that such suppression may take. This election will take place under unprecedented circumstances, and both accurate and inaccurate information will no doubt spread quickly on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Social media companies need clear, unambiguous policies prohibiting voter inference and suppression—and the ability *and willingness* to seek out violations and enforce those policies against all users equally. I am deeply concerned when I see, for instance, studies showing uneven enforcement of disinformation and misinformation policies across platforms.<sup>11</sup> And, I am even more dismayed when I see Facebook’s independent civil rights auditors excoriate the company for “[being] far too reluctant to adopt strong policies to limit misinformation and voter suppression,” and ignoring their “biggest concern [that] domestic political forces would use the platform as a vehicle to engage in voter suppression.”<sup>12</sup>

The tragic reality of voter suppression tactics is that, too often, they work. The 2016 election cycle saw “the first fall in Black turnout in 20 years.”<sup>13</sup> While I appreciate that social media companies have taken some corrective actions since 2016, I am concerned that too many blind spots remain.

As the new Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Innovation for the Committee on Homeland Security, I would like to understand what measures you have put in place at Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to counter voter suppression, interference, and disinformation targeting Black voters, as we head into the last few weeks before Election Day. Accordingly, pursuant to Rule X(3)(g) and Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I respectfully request that you respond by October 9, 2020.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Lauren Underwood

Chairwoman

Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Innovation

---

<sup>11</sup> J. Scott Brennan, Felix Simon, Philip N. Howard and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, *Types, sources, and claims of COVID-19 misinformation*, University of Oxford Internet Institute and Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Apr. 7, 2020, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/types-sources-and-claims-covid-19-misinformation#responses> (showing, for a sample dataset of COVID-19 misinformation spread throughout January to March 2020, Twitter allowed almost 60% of the content to remain on the site without any flags or warning labels, compared to 27% of content that remained on YouTube and 24% on Facebook).

<sup>12</sup> Laura W. Murphy and Megan Cacace, *Facebook’s Civil Rights Audit – Final Report*, Jul. 2020, <https://about.fb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Civil-Rights-Audit-Final-Report.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> “Revealed: Trump campaign strategy to deter millions of Black Americans from voting in 2016,” *Channel 4 News*.



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

October 2, 2020

Mr. Jack Dorsey  
Chief Executive Officer  
Twitter, Inc.  
1355 Market Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Dorsey:

With the election already underway, I write to you with deep concern about the myriad of ways that social media platforms like Twitter may continue to be used to spread disinformation targeting Black voters, or to otherwise suppress, intimidate, and interfere with Black voter turnout in 2020.

The 2016 election was a watershed moment for social media companies, as platforms were hijacked by malicious actors aiming to silence Black voters and sow racial division. Investigations revealed a sophisticated Russian plot to flood the social media accounts of American voters with inflammatory, divisive content that was—*most often*—designed to prey on racial tensions and dampen enthusiasm among Black voters.<sup>1</sup> As the bipartisan Senate Select Committee on Intelligence noted in 2018, “no single group of Americans was targeted...more than African-Americans.”<sup>2</sup>

As you know, these tactics remain in use on your platform play today, and have been employed by a wider range of countries, organizations, and individuals, including within the U.S.<sup>3</sup> Since 2016, we have seen China and Iran enter the disinformation space, with varying motivations and sophistication levels.<sup>4</sup> Further, we have seen a massive surge in domestic disinformation,

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence, *Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election – Volume 2: Russia’s Use of Social Media with Additional Views*, U.S. Senate, Oct. 2019, [https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report\\_Volume2.pdf](https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume2.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> “Black voters are being targeted in disinformation campaigns, echoing the 2016 Russian playbook,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 26, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/08/26/race-divisions-highlighted-disinformation-2016/>.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Statement by William Evanina, Director of the National Counter Terrorism Center, *Election Threat Update for the American Public*, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Aug. 7, 2020,

misinformation, and conspiracy theories spread on social media which can be repurposed by foreign actors.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Russian disinformation has not abated, with reports showing new activity by the Internet Research Agency and the operatives responsible for the “hack-and-leak” of Democratic National Committee emails in 2016.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the Kremlin appears to be outsourcing some disinformation operations to “troll farms” in Ghana and Nigeria in the hopes that African nationals will be able to more convincingly speak to American audiences about racial division in the U.S.<sup>7</sup> Content generated by these troll farms reportedly used “a mixture of sentiments to cultivate followers and manipulate U.S. narratives about race, racial tensions and police conduct” specifically crafted to encourage distrust in Black communities.<sup>8</sup>

Four years later, the scope and persistence of such threats on Twitter to Black Americans’ civic participation remain extremely concerning. While platforms have made some improvements when it comes to disrupting this activity, these takedowns are often spurred by tips from law enforcement or external researchers rather than surfaced through internal investigation and reporting structures.<sup>9</sup>

We have also learned more about the direct role some social media companies played in supporting the Trump campaign’s voter suppression effort. Just this week, an investigation by *Channel 4 News* shed light on how President Trump’s 2016 campaign was able to use Facebook’s data, algorithms, targeted advertising tools, and even embedded employees to try to convince 3.5 million Black Americans to “stay home” on Election Day.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, the continued efforts to maliciously target Black voters on your platform raise questions about whether you, as Chief Executive Officer of Twitter, fully appreciate the range of tactics that have been used to suppress Black turnout and the many forms that such suppression may take. This election will take place under unprecedented circumstances, and both accurate and

---

<https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/item/2139-statement-by-ncsc-director-william-evanina-election-threat-update-for-the-american-public>.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Richard Stengel, “Domestic Disinformation is a Greater Menace than Foreign Disinformation,” *TIME*, Jun. 26, 2020, <https://time.com/5860215/domestic-disinformation-growing-menace-america/>; Paul M. Barrett, *Tackling Domestic Disinformation: What the Social Media Companies Need to Do*, New York University Center for Business and Human Rights, Mar. 2019, [https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/NYU20Domestic20Disinformation\\_Digital20Version.pdf](https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/NYU20Domestic20Disinformation_Digital20Version.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Ben Nimmo, Camille Francois, C. Shawn Eib and Lea Ronzaud, *IRA Again: Unlucky Thirteen*, Sep. 2020, [https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphika\\_report\\_ira\\_again\\_unlucky\\_thirteen.pdf](https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphika_report_ira_again_unlucky_thirteen.pdf); Nathaniel Gleicher, *Removing Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior*, Facebook, Sep. 24, 2020, <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/09/removing-coordinated-inauthentic-behavior-russia/>.

<sup>7</sup> “Russian election meddling is back – via Ghana and Nigeria – and in your feeds,” *CNN*, Apr. 11, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/12/world/russia-ghana-troll-farms-2020-ward/index.html>.

<sup>8</sup> “Russia’s disinformation campaigns are targeting African Americans,” *Washington Post*, Jul. 24, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/07/24/russias-disinformation-campaigns-are-targeting-african-americans/>.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *Removing Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior*, Sep. 24, 2020 and *August 2020 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report*, Sep. 1, 2020 (noting that Facebook “began this investigation based on information from the FBI about this network’s off-platform activity”).

<sup>10</sup> “Revealed: Trump campaign strategy to deter millions of Black Americans from voting in 2016,” *Channel 4 News*, Sep. 28, 2020, <https://www.channel4.com/news/revealed-trump-campaign-strategy-to-deter-millions-of-black-americans-from-voting-in-2016>.

inaccurate information will no doubt spread quickly on Twitter. Social media companies need clear, unambiguous policies prohibiting voter inference and suppression—and the ability *and willingness* to seek out violations and enforce those policies against all users equally. I am deeply concerned when I see, for instance, studies showing uneven enforcement of disinformation and misinformation policies across platforms.<sup>11</sup>

The tragic reality of voter suppression tactics is that, too often, they work. The 2016 election cycle saw “the first fall in Black turnout in 20 years.”<sup>12</sup> While I appreciate that social media companies have taken some corrective actions since 2016, I am concerned that too many blind spots remain.

As the new Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Innovation for the Committee on Homeland Security, I would like to understand what measures you have put in place at Twitter to counter voter suppression, interference, and disinformation targeting Black voters, as we head into the last few weeks before Election Day. Accordingly, pursuant to Rule X(3)(g) and Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I respectfully request that you respond by October 9, 2020.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Lauren Underwood  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Innovation

---

<sup>11</sup> J. Scott Brennan, Felix Simon, Philip N. Howard and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, *Types, sources, and claims of COVID-19 misinformation*, University of Oxford Internet Institute and Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Apr. 7, 2020, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/types-sources-and-claims-covid-19-misinformation#responses> (showing, for a sample dataset of COVID-19 misinformation spread throughout January to March 2020, Twitter allowed almost 60% of the content to remain on the site without any flags or warning labels, compared to 27% of content that remained on YouTube and 24% on Facebook).

<sup>12</sup> “Revealed: Trump campaign strategy to deter millions of Black Americans from voting in 2016,” *Channel 4 News*.



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

October 2, 2020

Ms. Susan Wojcicki  
Chief Executive Officer  
YouTube, Inc.  
901 Cherry Avenue  
San Bruno, CA 94066

Dear Ms. Wojcicki:

With the election already underway, I write to you with deep concern about the myriad of ways that social media platforms like YouTube may continue to be used to spread disinformation targeting Black voters, or to otherwise suppress, intimidate, and interfere with Black voter turnout in 2020.

The 2016 election was a watershed moment for social media companies, as platforms were hijacked by malicious actors aiming to silence Black voters and sow racial division. Investigations revealed a sophisticated Russian plot to flood the social media accounts of American voters with inflammatory, divisive content that was—*most often*—designed to prey on racial tensions and dampen enthusiasm among Black voters.<sup>1</sup> As the bipartisan Senate Select Committee on Intelligence noted in 2018, “no single group of Americans was targeted...more than African-Americans.”<sup>2</sup>

As you know, these tactics remain in use on your platform today, and have been employed by a wider range of countries, organizations, and individuals, including within the U.S.<sup>3</sup> Since 2016, China and Iran have entered the disinformation space, with varying motivations and sophistication

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence, *Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election – Volume 2: Russia’s Use of Social Media with Additional Views*, U.S. Senate, Oct. 2019, [https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report\\_Volume2.pdf](https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume2.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> “Black voters are being targeted in disinformation campaigns, echoing the 2016 Russian playbook,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 26, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/08/26/race-divisions-highlighted-disinformation-2016/>; “Russian election meddling is back – via Ghana and Nigeria – and in your feeds,” *CNN*, Apr. 11, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/12/world/russia-ghana-troll-farms-2020-ward/index.html>.

levels.<sup>4</sup> Further, there has been a massive surge in domestic disinformation, misinformation, and conspiracy theories spread on social media which can be repurposed by foreign actors.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Russian disinformation has not abated, with reports showing new activity by the Internet Research Agency and the operatives responsible for the “hack-and-leak” of Democratic National Committee emails in 2016.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the Kremlin appears to be outsourcing some disinformation operations to “troll farms” in Ghana and Nigeria in the hopes that African nationals will be able to more convincingly speak to American audiences about racial division in the U.S.<sup>7</sup> Content generated by these troll farms reportedly uses “a mixture of sentiments to cultivate followers and manipulate U.S. narratives about race, racial tensions and police conduct” specifically crafted to encourage distrust in Black communities.<sup>8</sup>

Four years later, the scope and persistence of such threats on YouTube to Black Americans’ civic participation remain extremely concerning. While platforms have made some improvements when it comes to disrupting this activity, these takedowns are often spurred by tips from law enforcement or external researchers rather than surfaced through internal investigation and reporting structures.<sup>9</sup>

We have also learned more about the direct role some social media companies played in supporting the Trump campaign’s voter suppression effort. Just this week, an investigation by *Channel 4 News* shed light on how President Trump’s 2016 campaign was able to use Facebook’s data, algorithms, targeted advertising tools, and even embedded employees to try to convince 3.5 million Black Americans to “stay home” on Election Day.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Statement by William Evanina, Director of the National Counter Terrorism Center, *Election Threat Update for the American Public*, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Aug. 7, 2020, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/item/2139-statement-by-ncsc-director-william-evanina-election-threat-update-for-the-american-public>.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Richard Stengel, “Domestic Disinformation is a Greater Menace than Foreign Disinformation,” *TIME*, Jun. 26, 2020, <https://time.com/5860215/domestic-disinformation-growing-menace-america/>; Paul M. Barrett, *Tackling Domestic Disinformation: What the Social Media Companies Need to Do*, New York University Center for Business and Human Rights, Mar. 2019, [https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/NYU20Domestic20Disinformation\\_Digital20Version.pdf](https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/NYU20Domestic20Disinformation_Digital20Version.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> *August 2020 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report*, Facebook, Sep. 1, 2020, <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/09/august-2020-cib-report/>; *Removing Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior*, Facebook, Sep. 24, 2020, <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/09/removing-coordinated-inauthentic-behavior-russia/>. See also, Ben Nimmo, Camille Francois, C. Shawn Eib and Lea Ronzaud, *IRA Again: Unlucky Thirteen*, Sep. 2020, [https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphika\\_report\\_ira\\_again\\_unlucky\\_thirteen.pdf](https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphika_report_ira_again_unlucky_thirteen.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> “Russian election meddling is back – via Ghana and Nigeria – and in your feeds,” *CNN*, Apr. 11, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/12/world/russia-ghana-troll-farms-2020-ward/index.html>.

<sup>8</sup> “Russia’s disinformation campaigns are targeting African Americans,” *Washington Post*, Jul. 24, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/07/24/russias-disinformation-campaigns-are-targeting-african-americans/>.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *Removing Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior*, Sep. 24, 2020 and *August 2020 Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report*, Sep. 1, 2020 (noting that Facebook “began this investigation based on information from the FBI about this network’s off-platform activity”).

<sup>10</sup> “Revealed: Trump campaign strategy to deter millions of Black Americans from voting in 2016,” *Channel 4 News*, Sep. 28, 2020, <https://www.channel4.com/news/revealed-trump-campaign-strategy-to-deter-millions-of-black-americans-from-voting-in-2016>.



Unfortunately, the continued efforts to maliciously target Black voters on your platform raise questions about whether you, as Chief Executive Officer of YouTube, fully appreciate the range of tactics that have been used to suppress Black turnout and the many forms that such suppression may take. This election will take place under unprecedented circumstances, and both accurate and inaccurate information will no doubt spread quickly on YouTube. Social media companies need clear, unambiguous policies prohibiting voter inference and suppression—and the ability *and willingness* to seek out violations and enforce those policies against all users equally. I am deeply concerned when I see, for instance, studies showing uneven enforcement of disinformation and misinformation policies across platforms.<sup>11</sup>

The tragic reality of voter suppression tactics is that, too often, they work. The 2016 election cycle saw “the first fall in Black turnout in 20 years.”<sup>12</sup> While I appreciate that social media companies have taken some corrective actions since 2016, I am concerned that too many blind spots remain.

As the new Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Innovation for the Committee on Homeland Security, I would like to understand what measures you have put in place at YouTube to counter voter suppression, interference, and disinformation targeting Black voters, as we head into the last few weeks before Election Day. Accordingly, pursuant to Rule X(3)(g) and Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I respectfully request that you respond by October 9, 2020.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Lauren Underwood  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Innovation

---

<sup>11</sup> J. Scott Brennan, Felix Simon, Philip N. Howard and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, *Types, sources, and claims of COVID-19 misinformation*, University of Oxford Internet Institute and Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Apr. 7, 2020, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/types-sources-and-claims-covid-19-misinformation#responses> (showing, for a sample dataset of COVID-19 misinformation spread throughout January to March 2020, Twitter allowed almost 60% of the content to remain on the site without any flags or warning labels, compared to 27% of content that remained on YouTube and 24% on Facebook).

<sup>12</sup> “Revealed: Trump campaign strategy to deter millions of Black Americans from voting in 2016,” *Channel 4 News*.