

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6216

(202) 225-6906  
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October 7, 2024

Mr. Sundar Pichai  
Chief Executive Officer  
Alphabet  
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway  
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Pichai:

The Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government continue to conduct oversight of how and to what extent the Executive Branch has coerced or colluded with companies and other intermediaries to censor lawful speech.<sup>1</sup> As part of this oversight, the Committee has obtained documents showing that the federal government successfully pressured YouTube, a subsidiary of Alphabet, to censor certain content, including content that did not violate YouTube's content moderation policies.<sup>2</sup> Now, YouTube appears to have censored a video in which FBI whistleblower Marcus Allen, a witness before the Select Subcommittee, detailed serious misconduct at the FBI and expressed his deeply held religious beliefs.<sup>3</sup> This censorship of religious and political speech is deeply troubling in light of YouTube's previous collusion with the Biden-Harris Administration and Alphabet's pattern of anti-conservative political bias.<sup>4</sup> We write to seek a briefing on YouTube's decision to censor the video featuring Marcus Allen and to request communications between YouTube and the Biden-Harris Administration relating to this censorship.

On September 29, 2024, just days after testifying before the Select Subcommittee, Marcus Allen, a former Marine and FBI Staff Operations Specialist who faced retaliation from

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<sup>1</sup> See Ryan Tracy, *Facebook Bowed to White House Pressure, Removed Covid Posts*, WALL ST. J. (July 28, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., 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 CENSORSHIP INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX: HOW TOP BIDEN WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS COERCED BIG TECH TO CENSOR AMERICANS, TRUE INFORMATION, AND CRITICS OF THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION* (Comm. Print May 1, 2024), at 6, 52-66; see also Rep. Jim Jordan (@Jim\_Jordan), X (Nov. 30, 2023, 8:44 AM), [https://twitter.com/Jim\\_Jordan/status/1730221179632226337](https://twitter.com/Jim_Jordan/status/1730221179632226337); Rep. Jim Jordan (@Jim\_Jordan), X (Dec. 1, 2023, 2:26 PM), [https://twitter.com/Jim\\_Jordan/status/1730669728002142706](https://twitter.com/Jim_Jordan/status/1730669728002142706); Rep. Jim Jordan (@Jim\_Jordan), X (May 1, 2024, 4:09 PM), [https://x.com/Jim\\_Jordan/status/1785763383142129733](https://x.com/Jim_Jordan/status/1785763383142129733).

<sup>3</sup> See *YouTube Cancels CforC Patriotic Rosary and interview with FBI whistleblower, Marcus Allen*, CATHOLICS FOR CATHOLICS (Sep. 29, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Letter from Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman, H. Comm. on the Judiciary, to Sundar Pichai, CEO, Alphabet (Aug. 5, 2024).

the FBI, sat for an interview and prayed the rosary with “Catholics for Catholics,” a 501(c)(4) organization, in a video posted to YouTube.<sup>5</sup> During the interview, Mr. Allen shared how the FBI targeted him for his political and religious beliefs, how the FBI’s retaliation affected him and his family, and how he relied on his faith during the ordeal.<sup>6</sup> Almost immediately, YouTube censored his story and religious expression.<sup>7</sup>

At every juncture, the Biden-Harris Administration has sought to silence Mr. Allen.<sup>8</sup> The FBI wrongly suspended him without pay due to his personal medical decisions, his religious beliefs, and for questioning FBI leadership.<sup>9</sup> The FBI even went so far as to baselessly question Mr. Allen’s allegiance to the United States, despite his many years of exemplary service to our country.<sup>10</sup> At the September 25, 2024 hearing before the Select Subcommittee, Department of Justice Inspector General Michael Horowitz said that “the details of Mr. Allen’s case illustrate many of the concerns and systemic issues that we have seen with the security clearance process.”<sup>11</sup> Following efforts by the Committee and Select Subcommittee to investigate the FBI’s retaliation against brave whistleblowers such as Mr. Allen, the FBI reinstated Mr. Allen’s security clearance and awarded him back pay.<sup>12</sup>

As part of our oversight of the FBI, the Committee and Select Subcommittee have investigated the FBI’s treatment of whistleblowers and its collusion with Big Tech to censor American speech online.<sup>13</sup> Given the past misconduct of the FBI and YouTube, YouTube’s

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<sup>5</sup> *YouTube Cancels CforC Patriotic Rosary and interview with FBI whistleblower, Marcus Allen*, CATHOLICS FOR CATHOLICS (Sep. 29, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *See, e.g.*, STAFF OF H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV’T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 118TH CONG., FBI WHISTLEBLOWER TESTIMONY HIGHLIGHTS GOVERNMENT ABUSE, MISALLOCATION OF RESOURCES, AND RETALIATION (Comm. Print May. 18, 2023); *see also* *Hearing on the Weaponization of the Federal Government: Hearing Before the Select Subcomm. on the Weaponization of the Fed. Gov’t of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 118th Cong. (May 18, 2023); *Hearing on the Weaponization of the Federal Government: Hearing Before the Select Subcomm. on the Weaponization of the Fed. Gov’t of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 118th Cong. (Sep. 25, 2024).

<sup>9</sup> STAFF OF H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV’T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 118TH CONG., FBI WHISTLEBLOWER TESTIMONY HIGHLIGHTS GOVERNMENT ABUSE, MISALLOCATION OF RESOURCES, AND RETALIATION (Comm. Print May. 18, 2023) at 59.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Hearing on the Weaponization of the Federal Government: Hearing Before the Select Subcomm. on the Weaponization of the Fed. Gov’t of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 118th Cong. (Sep. 25, 2024) (written testimony of Hon. Michael Horowitz).

<sup>12</sup> *Hearing on the Weaponization of the Federal Government: Hearing Before the Select Subcomm. on the Weaponization of the Fed. Gov’t of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 118th Cong. (Sep. 25, 2024) (testimony of Marcus Allen); Josh Christenson, *FBI specialist whose US ‘Allegiance’ was questioned over Capitol riot claims regains security clearance*, N.Y. POST (June 4, 2024).

<sup>13</sup> STAFF OF H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV’T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 118TH CONG., FBI WHISTLEBLOWER TESTIMONY HIGHLIGHTS GOVERNMENT ABUSE, MISALLOCATION OF RESOURCES, AND RETALIATION (Comm. Print May. 18, 2023); STAFF OF H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY AND SELECT SUBCOMM. ON THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE FED. GOV’T OF THE H. COMM. ON THE JUDICIARY, 118TH CONG., THE FBI’S COLLABORATION WITH A COMPROMISED UKRAINIAN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY TO CENSOR AMERICAN SPEECH (Comm. Print July 10, 2023); Brief for Jim Jordan, et. al, as Amicus Curiae, Murthy

Mr. Sundar Pichai

October 7, 2024

Page 3

ensorship of an FBI whistleblower’s story and religious speech is particularly troubling. Therefore, we request a briefing about YouTube’s decision to censor the September 29, 2024, video featuring Marcus Allen. For the briefing, we ask that Alphabet please be prepared to answer the following questions:

1. Why was the September 29, 2024 video featuring Marcus Allen’s interview and praying of the rosary removed from YouTube?
2. Was this removal done by automated systems or was it carried out manually?
3. Does YouTube intend to reinstate the video? Why or why not?
4. What protections does YouTube provide for speech that is explicitly religious or political? Why did those protections not apply here?
5. Which teams or divisions within YouTube are responsible for determining whether the video violates the company’s content moderation standards?
6. What communications did YouTube have with the Biden-Harris Administration before or after the video featuring Mr. Allen?

In addition, we remind you that the Committee’s February 15, 2023 subpoena to Alphabet is “continuing in nature,” and thus requires the ongoing production of material concerning Alphabet’s engagement with the Executive Branch and Alphabet’s decisions and policies regarding content moderation.<sup>14</sup> In light of the censorship of Mr. Allen, we request that you prioritize producing the following documents:

1. All documents or communications between Alphabet personnel and Executive Branch personnel referring or relating to the moderation, deletion, suppression, restriction, demonetization, or reduced circulation of content referring or relating to Marcus Allen.

Please arrange for this briefing and produce the requested documents as soon as possible, but no later than 10:00 am on October 21, 2024. 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.<sup>15</sup> In addition, House Resolution 12 authorized the Committee’s Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government to investigate “issues related to the violation of the civil liberties of citizens

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v. Missouri, No. 23-411, at 17 (filed Feb. 15, 2024); Letter from Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman, H. Comm. on the Judiciary, to Hon. Christopher A. Wray, Dir., Fed. Bureau of Investigation (July 20, 2023).

<sup>14</sup> Document Subpoena for Mr. Sundar Pichai before the H. Comm.on the Judiciary (Feb. 15, 2023) at Schedule A, 1, 5, *Instructions*, ¶ 14.

<sup>15</sup> Rules of the House of Representatives R. X (2023).

Mr. Sundar Pichai

October 7, 2024

Page 4

of the United States.”<sup>16</sup> To arrange the briefing and if you have any questions about this matter, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-6906.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "D".

Jim Jordan  
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Jerrold L. Nadler, Ranking Member

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<sup>16</sup> H. Res. 12 § 1(b)(1).