

[REDACTED]

From: Kane, Rowan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 16, 2021 1:54 PM
To: Kane, Rowan
Cc: Chapple, Margaret
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vaccine Disinformation Letter to Facebook and Twitter
Attachments: AG Letter to Tech CEOs re antivax.docx; AG Letter to Tech CEOs Cover Letter.docx

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Hi all,

With coronavirus vaccines ramping up dramatically, we are unfortunately seeing a rise in vaccine disinformation on social media. Over 65% of that fraudulent information comes from just 12 individuals. While Facebook (including Instagram) and Twitter have policies outlawing this kind of harmful information, they have thus far been lax in enforcing their policies. Attached is a letter to Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey asking them to enforce those policies on vaccine disinformation being spread on their platforms. There will be a Congressional hearing next Thursday, 3/25, in the Energy and Technology Committee. We have also attached a cover letter to the leadership of the E&T and the two cognizant subcommittees.

We are asking for any **edits to be submitted by COB on Friday, 3/19** and confirmation of **sign-on by COB Tuesday, 3/23**. Thank you in advance for your support on this issue and please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Rowan Kane

Counselor to the Attorney General and Deputy Director of Policy

Office of the Attorney General, 165 Capitol Ave, Hartford, CT 06106

Office Phone: [REDACTED] | URL: <http://portal.ct.gov/ag/>

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Dear Messrs. Dorsey and Zuckerberg:

As Attorneys General committed to protecting the safety and well-being of the residents of our states, we write to express our concern about the use of your platforms to spread fraudulent information about coronavirus vaccines and to seek your cooperation in curtailing the dissemination of such information. The people and groups spreading falsehoods and misleading Americans about the safety of coronavirus vaccines are threatening the health of our communities, slowing progress in getting our residents protected from the virus, and undermining economic recovery in our states.

With the arrival of safe and effective coronavirus vaccines, our nation now has the tools it needs to end the pandemic. Our ability to do so quickly and limit further loss of life depends on broad public acceptance of the vaccines. However, misinformation disseminated via your platforms has increased vaccine hesitancy, which will slow economic recovery and, more importantly, ultimately cause even more unnecessary deaths. A small group of people—anti-vaxxers—wholly lacking in medical expertise and often motivated by financial interests, are using your platforms to downplay the dangers of COVID-19 and spread misinformation about the safety of vaccines. According to a recent report by the Center for Countering Digital Hate, anti-vaxxer accounts on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter reach more than 59 million followers. Anti-vaxxers are using social media platforms to target people of color and Black Americans specifically, members of communities who have suffered the worst health impacts of the virus and whose vaccination rates are lagging.

Given anti-vaxxers' reliance on your platforms, you are uniquely positioned to prevent the spread of misinformation about coronavirus vaccines that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of millions of Americans in our states and that will prolong our road to recovery.

We applaud the updated policies you have established to prevent the spread of vaccine misinformation. However, anti-vaccine misinformation continues to spread on your platforms, in violation of your stated policies.

- Twitter and Facebook have yet to remove from all their platforms the accounts of prominent anti-vaxxers who have repeatedly violated the companies' terms of service, including Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Sherri Tenpenny, Joseph Mercola, Rizza Islam, Ty & Charlene Bollinger, Kevin Jenkins, Rashid Buttar, Christiane Northrup, Ben Tapper, Kelly Brogan, Sayer Ji, and Erin Elizabeth. Digital media research groups estimate that as of March 10, these 12 anti-vaxxers' personal accounts and their associated organizations, groups and websites are responsible for 65% of public anti-vaccine content on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
- Facebook has failed to consistently apply misinformation labels and popups on Facebook pages and groups that discuss vaccines or COVID-19. For example, the company neglected to apply warning labels on dozens of Facebook groups that anti-vaxxer Larry Cook created for his followers. At the same time, the company has mistakenly flagged pro-vaccine pages and content in ways that have undermined pro-vaccine public education efforts.
- Facebook has allowed anti-vaxxers to skirt its policy of removing misinformation that health experts have debunked, by failing to prevent them from using video and streaming tools like Facebook Live and sites like Bitchute, Rumble, and Brighteon to evade detection.

We call on you to take immediate steps to fully enforce your companies' policies against vaccine misinformation. By effectively rooting out fraudulent information about coronavirus vaccines, you can prevent needless illness and death and hasten our road to recovery.

Sincerely,

OBTAINED BY AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION THROUGH LITIGATION

We are asking for any edits to be submitted by COB on Friday, 3/19 and confirmation of sign-on by COB Tuesday, 3/23. Thank you in advance for your support on this issue and please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,



Rowan Kane
Counselor to the Attorney General and Deputy Director of Policy

Office of the Attorney General
165 Capitol Ave, Hartford, CT 06106
Office: [REDACTED] Fax: +1 860-808-5387 | URL: <https://ct.gov/ag/>

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[REDACTED]

From: Kane, Rowan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 5:12 PM
To: Chapple, Margaret
Cc: 'Laura Stuber'; 'Melanie Fontes Rainer'; 'Adam Rice'; Kane, Rowan; Lake, Nicole; Benton, Elizabeth; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Levy,
Jennifer (NY-OAG); Wade, David;
[REDACTED] Rowan Kane
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Vaccine Disinformation Letter to Facebook and Twitter
Attachments: AG Letter to Tec CEOs re anti vax 3.22.docx

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Hi all,

Thank you to those who submitted comments and edits on the letter to tech CEOs regarding vaccine disinformation on their platforms and thank you to Delaware, New York, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Michigan for your early sign-ons (if I've missed anyone, please let me know!). Attached is the latest version in which we've edited some language, primarily around the platforms' community guidelines/policies and also removed the names of the 12 individuals.

Sign on is due by COB tomorrow Tuesday, March 23.

Let me know if you have any questions and thanks for your attention to this important issue.

Best,

Rowan

From: Kane, Rowan
Sent: Tuesday, March 16, 2021 1:54 PM
To: Rowan Kane [REDACTED]
Cc: Chapple, Margaret [REDACTED]
Subject: Vaccine Disinformation Letter to Facebook and Twitter

Hi all,

With coronavirus vaccines ramping up dramatically, we are unfortunately seeing a rise in vaccine disinformation on social media. Over 65% of that fraudulent information comes from just 12 individuals. While Facebook (including Instagram) and Twitter have policies outlawing this kind of harmful information, they have thus far been lax in enforcing their policies. Attached is a letter to Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey asking them to enforce those policies on vaccine disinformation being spread on their platforms. There will be a Congressional hearing next Thursday, 3/25, in the Energy and Technology Committee. We have also attached a cover letter to the leadership of the E&T and the two cognizant subcommittees.

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Dear Messrs. Dorsey and Zuckerberg:

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As safe and effective vaccines become available, the end of this pandemic is in sight. This end, however, depends on the widespread acceptance of these vaccines as safe and effective. Unfortunately, misinformation disseminated via your platforms has increased vaccine hesitancy, which will slow economic recovery and, more importantly, ultimately cause even more unnecessary deaths. A small group of individuals use your platforms to downplay the dangers of COVID-19 and spread misinformation about the safety of vaccines. These individuals lack medical expertise and are often motivated by financial interests. According to a recent report by the Center for Countering Digital Hate, so-called “anti-vaxxer” accounts on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter reach more than 59 million followers. “Anti-vaxxers” are using social media platforms to target people of color and Black Americans specifically, members of communities who have suffered the worst health impacts of the virus and whose vaccination rates are lagging.

Given “anti-vaxxers” reliance on your platforms, you are uniquely positioned to prevent the spread of misinformation about coronavirus vaccines that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of millions of Americans in our states and that will prolong our road to recovery.

The updated community guidelines you have established to prevent the spread of vaccine misinformation appear to be a step in the right direction. However, it is apparent that Facebook has not taken sufficient action to identify violations and enforce these guidelines by removing and labelling misinformation and banning repeat offenders. As a result, anti-vaccine misinformation continues to spread on your platforms, in violation of your community standards.

- Twitter and Facebook have yet to remove from all their platforms the accounts of prominent anti-vaxxers who have repeatedly violated the companies’ terms of service. Digital media research groups estimate that as of March 10, 12 anti-vaxxers’ personal accounts and their associated organizations, groups and websites are responsible for 65% of public anti-vaccine content on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
- Facebook has failed to consistently apply misinformation labels and popups on Facebook pages and groups that discuss vaccines or COVID-19. For example, the company neglected to apply warning labels on dozens of Facebook groups that anti-vaxxer Larry Cook created for his followers. At the same time, the company has mistakenly flagged pro-vaccine pages and content in ways that have undermined pro-vaccine public education efforts.
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We call on you to take immediate steps to fully enforce your companies’ guidelines against vaccine misinformation. By effectively rooting out fraudulent information about coronavirus vaccines, you can prevent needless illness and death and hasten our road to recovery.

Sincerely,

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[REDACTED]

From: Kane, Rowan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 3:20 PM
To: [REDACTED] Blake, Nathan [AG]; [REDACTED] Grossi, Christina (AG); Donna Cassutt; Levy, Jennifer (NY-OAG); [REDACTED] 'Dearmin, Seth'; [REDACTED] Kurinsky-Malos Michaela; Wade, David; Bentz, Kristen; Kate Sabatini; Kelly, Michael K.; [REDACTED]
Cc: Chapple, Margaret
Subject: [EXTERNAL] AG Letter to Facebook and Twitter
Attachments: AG Letter to Facebook and Twitter.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi all,

I know this went out to your press offices earlier today but just wanted to circulate the final draft of the letter that we sent to Facebook and Twitter earlier today. Thanks for your support on this important issue and look forward to working with you all on this and everything else.

Best,



ROWAN KANE
Counselor to the Attorney General and Deputy Director of Policy

Office of the Attorney General
165 Capitol Ave, Hartford, CT 06106
Office: [REDACTED] | Fax: +1 860-808-5387 | URL: <https://ct.gov/ag/>

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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONNECTICUT

WILLIAM TONG
ATTORNEY GENERAL

March 24, 2021

Via First Class and Electronic Mail

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

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

Re: Vaccine Disinformation

Dear Messrs. Dorsey and Zuckerberg:

As Attorneys General committed to protecting the safety and well-being of the residents of our states, we write to express our concern about the use of your platforms to spread fraudulent information about coronavirus vaccines and to seek your cooperation in curtailing the dissemination of such information. The people and groups spreading falsehoods and misleading Americans about the safety of coronavirus vaccines are threatening the health of our communities, slowing progress in getting our residents protected from the virus, and undermining economic recovery in our states.

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¹ [Center for Countering Digital Hate \(counterhate.com\)](https://www.counterhate.com)

165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

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Jack Dorsey, CEO, Twitter
Mark Zuckerberg, Chairman & CEO, Facebook
March 24, 2021
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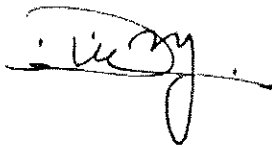
Given “anti-vaxxers” reliance on your platforms, you are uniquely positioned to prevent the spread of misinformation about coronavirus vaccines that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of millions of Americans in our states and that will prolong our road to recovery.

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- Facebook has allowed anti-vaxxers to skirt its policy of removing misinformation that health experts have debunked, by failing to prevent them from using video and streaming tools like Facebook Live and sites like Bitchute, Rumble, and Brighteon to evade detection.

We call on you to take immediate steps to fully enforce your companies’ guidelines against vaccine misinformation. By effectively rooting out fraudulent information about coronavirus vaccines, you can prevent needless illness and death and hasten our road to recovery.

Sincerely,

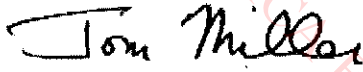


WILLIAM TONG
Attorney General of Connecticut

Jack Dorsey, CEO, Twitter
Mark Zuckerberg, Chairman & CEO, Facebook
March 24, 2021
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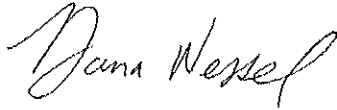
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Attorney General of Delaware



TOM MILLER
Attorney General of Iowa



MAURA HEALY
Attorney General of Massachusetts



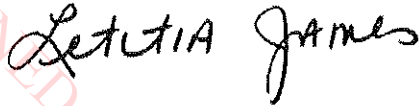
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Attorney General of Michigan



KEITH ELLISON
Attorney General of Minnesota

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Mark Zuckerberg, Chairman & CEO, Facebook
March 24, 2021
Page | 4



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Attorney General of New York



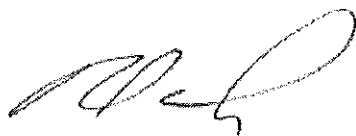
JOSHUA STEIN
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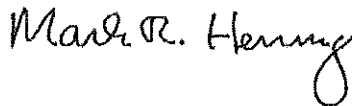
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MARK HERRING
Attorney General of Virginia

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