



November 4, 2019

Chairman Josh Hawley  
Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism  
Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. Senate  
226 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse  
Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism  
Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. Senate  
226 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Hawley and Ranking Member Whitehouse:

On behalf of TikTok US, a popular destination for entertaining short-form mobile video content, we appreciate the opportunity to submit this letter for the record of your hearing, "How Corporations and Big Tech Leave Our Data Exposed to Criminals, China and Other Bad Actors." We share your concerns about the threats of data security/cyber-attacks, and we are committed to transparency and accountability in how we support our TikTok users and how we store and secure their data.

We wanted to provide you an overview of the company and our policies and positions relating to data security and platform content, both of which are complex issues that TikTok takes very seriously.

#### Our Company

TikTok's mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy. TikTok provides users with the ability to create, share and discover entertaining short-form videos that are primarily comedy, memes, dance, animals, travel, lip-sync, etc.

The TikTok mobile application is distributed by TikTok, Inc., a U.S. company that is a part of ByteDance Ltd., a global company originated from Beijing, China, but incorporated outside of China, which offers a portfolio of applications in more than 150 countries. ByteDance is a privately-owned VC-backed tech company and most of its investors are global institutional investors such as KKR, Sequoia, Softbank, Coatue, Fidelity, Goldman Sachs and New Enterprise Associates.

TikTok US is led by a U.S.-based team, comprised of several hundred employees in six offices across the United States. For purpose of clarification, the TikTok app is not available in China and the TikTok app cannot be downloaded there.

### Our Commitment to Data Privacy and Security

TikTok is aware of several of your colleagues' concerns about data privacy and security on our platform. At TikTok, we take these issues incredibly seriously as well. We are committed to protecting our users' data in the U.S. TikTok stores all U.S. user data in the United States, with backup redundancy in Singapore. TikTok's data centers are located outside of China. Further, we have a dedicated technical team focused on adhering to robust cybersecurity policies, data privacy, and security practices. In addition, we hired a leading US-based outside auditing firm which analyzed TikTok and its data security practices, and we are committed to doing this type of audit on an ongoing basis.

TikTok follows the laws and regulations of the markets in which we operate. For example, if we receive a search warrant or court order in the U.S., we comply with these requests in accordance with applicable law.

### Our Commitment to Platform Content

TikTok is committed to providing a safe and expressive app experience for our community, and we aim to be a leader in this area. For example, TikTok recently announced plans to form a committee of outside experts to help ensure that TikTok is well prepared to serve our users and community effectively and responsibly.<sup>1</sup> This committee will advise on and review content moderation policies and help further increase transparency around these policies. One such policy already announced is that TikTok will not accept political advertisements<sup>2</sup>.

TikTok moderates content in accordance with our Community Guidelines,<sup>3</sup> which are designed to help ensure that TikTok is a fun and safe community for our users. We remove content that violates those rules — like pornography, spam or violence — in a manner consistent with our US values and industry standards. TikTok uses a combination of machine learning tools and several rounds of human moderation to review content; Our US moderation team, which is led out of California, reviews content for adherence to our US policies — just like other US companies in our space.

No governments, foreign or domestic, direct how we moderate TikTok content - that is left in the capable hands of professional content moderation teams led by our US-based team. We are proud of the fact that our young company has quickly earned its reputation as a fun, engaging site for users around the world to create, watch and share content. TikTok does not remove

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<sup>1</sup> See "Our commitment to our users and the TikTok experience," available at <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/our-commitment-to-our-users-and-the-tik-tok-experience>

<sup>2</sup> See "Understanding our policies around paid ads," available at <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/understanding-our-policies-around-paid-ads>

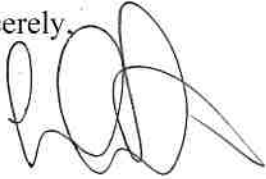
<sup>3</sup> TikTok's Community Guidelines are available at <https://support.tiktok.com/en/privacy-safety/community-policy-en>.

content based on sensitivities related to China (or other countries). We never been asked by the Chinese government to remove any content, and we would not do so if asked.

\* \* \*

We look forward to further dialogue with you and your colleagues on these critical issues to protect our users so that they can continue to engage on our platform safely as they create and enjoy artistic and joyful content.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vanessa Pappas', with a stylized, flowing script.

Vanessa Pappas  
General Manager, TikTok US

cc: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee