

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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December 7, 2023

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

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg:

We are troubled by the rapid spread of abortion misinformation and disinformation on your company's social media platforms Facebook and Instagram, and the threat this development poses to safe abortion access in the United States. As you know, the Supreme Court's decision last year in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (*Dobbs*) struck down the constitutional right of a woman to choose an abortion in consultation with her physician that was established 50 years ago in *Roe v. Wade*. As the legal status of abortion changes across the country and a number of state legislatures impose drastic new restrictions on health care choices, people seeking information about abortion care and services turn to Facebook and Instagram for accurate and reliable information—not propaganda.

Yet individuals and groups that are anti-choice are promoting dangerously inaccurate medical information and false content about abortion online, including on Meta's platforms like Facebook and Instagram.¹ This flood of abortion misinformation and disinformation seeks to discourage people from getting abortion care and services by offering them bad medical advice.² As abortion misinformation and disinformation surge online, patients can come to doubt their health care institutions, their doctors, and themselves—putting their own health and safety at risk.

¹ Institute for Strategic Dialogue, *Evaluating Platform Abortion-Related Speech Policies: Were Platforms Prepared for the Post-Dobbs Environment?* (Oct. 11, 2022) (online at www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/evaluating-platform-abortion-related-speech-policies-were-platforms-prepared-for-the-post-dobbs-environment/); International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics, *Amnesty International's Updated Policy on Abortion: A Resource for Medical Providers* (Feb. 1, 2021) (online at <https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ijgo.13634>); Alison Norris, M.D. Ph.D., et al., *Abortion Stigma: A Reconceptualization of Constituents, Causes, and Consequences*, *Women's Health Issues* (Feb. 12, 2011) (online at www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pubs/journals/Abortion-Stigma.pdf).

² *The Latest Social Media Misinformation: Abortion Pill Reversals*, Politico (Aug. 20, 2022) (online at www.politico.com/news/2022/08/20/abortion-misinformation-social-media-00052645).

Despite your company’s Community Standards and Advertising Standards that claim to address misinformation and disinformation, public reporting indicates that your platforms allow users to push deceptive and misleading information about abortion and related health services.

For example, Facebook and Instagram are rife with posts and advertisements containing false information about reversing medication abortion by a so-called “abortion pill reversal.” Abortion pill reversal—administering high doses of the hormone progesterone after mifepristone, the first pill required for a medication abortion—is a disproven and dangerous medical procedure.³ In many instances, attempting to complete an “abortion pill reversal” procedure causes serious medical complications, including rapid blood loss.⁴ Medication abortion, in contrast, has long been recognized as safe and effective by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and other leading medical organizations.⁵

Despite the science being clear about the dangers of abortion pill reversal and your company’s claims that it is fighting misinformation, anti-abortion organizations continue to post inaccurate and misleading statements advocating for abortion pill reversal services and to post false and misleading medical testimonials from both providers and patients, which seem at direct odds with Meta’s policies and standards on medical misinformation, including guidelines for removing medical misinformation that poses a “risk of serious injury.”⁶

A major anti-abortion organization has promoted advertisements about abortion pill reversal, stating: “To date, OVER 2,000 BABIES have been SAVED by the abortion pill reversal protocol. *IT MIGHT NOT BE TOO LATE.*”⁷

³ *The Latest Social Media Misinformation: Abortion Pill Reversals*, Politico (Aug. 20, 2022) (online at www.politico.com/news/2022/08/20/abortion-misinformation-social-media-00052645); Media Matters, *Facebook Has Earned Tens of Thousands of Dollars Running Ads with Misinformation About Abortion Pills* (Aug. 3, 2022) (online at www.mediamatters.org/facebook/facebook-has-earned-tens-thousands-dollars-running-ads-misinformation-about-abortion-pills); Institute for Strategic Dialogue, *Evaluating Platform Abortion-Related Speech Policies: Were Platforms Prepared for the Post-Dobbs Environment?*, at Pages 19–22 (Oct. 11, 2022) (online at www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Evaluating-Platform-Abortion-Related-Speech-Policies.pdf). See also American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, *Facts Are Important: Medication Abortion “Reversal” Is Not Supported by Science* (online at www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/medication-abortion-reversal-is-not-supported-by-science) (accessed Oct. 20, 2023).

⁴ *Some Lawmakers Push “Abortion Reversal” Treatments. A Study Shows How Dangerous They Are*, Washington Post (Dec. 2, 2019) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/health/2019/12/24/some-lawmakers-push-abortion-reversal-treatments-new-study-shows-how-dangerous-they-are/).

⁵ *Facts Are Important: Medication Abortion “Reversal” Is Not Supported By Science*, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (online at www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/medication-abortion-reversal-is-not-supported-by-science) (accessed Dec. 5, 2023).

⁶ Meta Transparency Center, *Misinformation* (online at <https://transparency.fb.com/policies/community-standards/misinformation>) (accessed Aug. 8, 2023).

⁷ National Right to Life, Facebook (Feb. 22, 2023) (online at www.facebook.com/nationalrighttolife/posts/pfbid02u46PiECGwEnJwU3vw9hcXiwgHyQSAASZMZ9rmaSDmX3WRUPmfaNVA3qQnZT8i1oWl).

That same organization posted a video, which has collected 2.7 million views, promoting popular anti-abortion narratives, including misinformation about medical procedures, abortion pill reversal, and the imposition of stigma on women seeking an abortion. The video caption stated:

Meet the babies saved by Abortion Pill Reversal. With quick thinking and the help of trained medical professionals, these women who had taken the abortion pill were able to give their babies a second chance at life.⁸

One social media influencer posted a video on Instagram in partnership with a major anti-abortion organization, with the caption spreading a *false* and therefore dangerous claim that abortion is never medically justified. The caption stated: “There’s never a reason to murder a child. No matter the circumstances, the pro-life movement is here to support women and ensure they have a way to embrace life.”⁹

Another major anti-abortion organization paid for advertisements on your site stating “No woman should ever feel forced to finish an abortion. If you have regret, there is hope.” And “There’s still hope to *reverse* a chemical abortion.”¹⁰

In addition, crisis pregnancy centers and anti-abortion advocates frequently use Facebook and Meta to push advertisements and posts about services like abortion pill reversal. Between January 2020 and September 2021 alone, Facebook accepted between \$115,400 and \$140,667 for 92 advertisements promoting abortion pill reversal up to 18.4 million times.¹¹ Your company’s decision to keep these posts visible seems at odds with your Community Standards and Advertising Standards empowering you to block misinformation and misleading advertisements within your platform.

Finally, public reporting suggests that decisions by Meta’s Oversight Board in adjudicating whether abortion-related posts violate the company’s Community Standards are largely arbitrary, particularly with regard to misinformation and fraud.¹² In some instances,

⁸ Live Action, Facebook (Nov. 17, 2022) (online at www.facebook.com/liveaction/videos/abortion-pill-reversal-success-stories/1074335883262369/); Abortion Pill Reversal, Facebook (June 14, 2023) (online at www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=246533961351737).

⁹ Live Action and Lila Rose, Instagram (Aug. 25, 2023) (online at www.instagram.com/p/CwXt38YhvMH/). This video received 114,106 likes as of November 14, 2023. *Id.*

¹⁰ Abortion Pill Reversal, Facebook (June 14, 2023) (online at www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=246533961351737). This advertisement was active July 14, 2023, to August 28, 2023, and reached more than 1 million people in the state of Texas. During this period, Texas women were testifying against the State of Texas against the state’s abortion restrictions. *Women Suing Texas Over Abortion Bans Give Emotional Testimony*, ABC News (July 19, 2023) (online at <https://abcnews.go.com/US/women-suing-texas-abortion-bans-court-testify/story?id=101487004>).

¹¹ Center for Countering Digital Hate, *Endangering Women for Profit* (Sept. 14, 2021) (online at <https://counterhate.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Endangering-Women-for-Profit-The-so-called-abortion-reversal.pdf>).


¹² *How Meta Created a Wild West for Abortion Misinformation*, Slate (July 31, 2023) (online at <https://slate.com/technology/2023/07/abortion-misinformation-meta-oversight-board.html>).

posts that offer legitimate medical information and help users find abortion care are removed under Meta’s “violence and incitement policy.”¹³ I am concerned that Meta’s current Community Standards, Advertising Standards and overall review process are not functioning as intended and that instead of preventing the dissemination of abortion misinformation and disinformation, they are blocking users from accessing healthcare providers and getting the information they need to obtain health care, a more urgent priority than ever in our lifetimes.


To ensure that misinformation and disinformation do not further undermine the ability of people to obtain appropriate abortion-related health care from trained medical professionals, we urge you to take immediate action to combat the spread of abortion misinformation and disinformation on all Meta platforms, in all languages. We also request that you provide a briefing to Committee staff regarding the steps your company is taking to address abortion misinformation and disinformation on Meta platforms no later than December 14, 2023.

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5051.

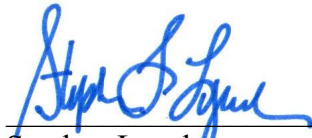
Sincerely,



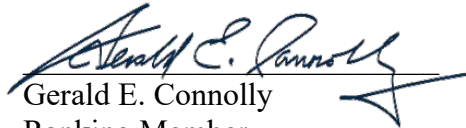
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¹³ *Id.*



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cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

The Honorable Nancy Mace, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation

The Honorable Lisa McClain, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services

The Honorable Glenn Grothman, Chairman
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