

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 4, 2023

Elon Musk
X Corp
1355 Market Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Elon Musk,

We write as concerned Members of Congress regarding recent reports that half of X's election integrity team was laid off in the past week. We are looking for clarity on the issue and strongly urge you to maintain robust measures to prevent further spread of election misinformation.

As you know, election integrity teams are critical to the operations of any social media company. Such staff are integral in protecting users from election misinformation, interference, and intentional manipulation on digital platforms. Combatting these threats is particularly important on X, formerly known as Twitter, as millions of Americans use the platform to obtain critical news and election information.

The layoffs made in recent days on X's election integrity team leave us with grave concerns about the likely impact on our constituents and our democracy.¹ We were also troubled to learn that X recently disabled a feature that allows users to report political posts that they consider misleading². In doing so, X has left users defenseless against the spread of election misinformation.

This has not been our first concern about the hostile environment you have created on X's platform since you took over. For instance, misinformation and hate speech has only increased on your platform since you assumed the role.³ We have written to you before regarding the extreme spike in the number of tweets that include slurs, the level of engagement with these tweets, and the popularity of spreading harmful rhetoric. New research has also emerged since our previous letters that further illustrates the proliferation of hate and misinformation on your platform.⁴

We understand that there is a monetary gain to be made by allowing bad actors on your platform. From reinstating accounts that were espousing hate, it was estimated that X could generate up to \$19 million a year in advertising revenue.⁵ The latest report from the Anti-Defamation League and the Tech Transparency Project explains the extent to which X runs ads on content associated with white supremacists and other bad actors likely to spread election misinformation.⁶ However, revenue for your platform should not come at the cost of the safety of users.

Unfortunately, our concern for our constituents has been met with continuous hostility from you and your team. You have personally directed a number of hostile tweets at accounts of Members of Congress, which have included statistics without evidence, unclear graphs, and generally antagonistic comments.⁷

¹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/x-makes-cuts-disinformation-election-integrity-team-rcna117744>

² <https://www.reuters.com/technology/musks-x-disabled-feature-reporting-electoral-misinformation-researcher-2023-09-27/>

³ <https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Antisemitism-on-Twitter-Before-and-After-Elon-Musks-Acquisition.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/profitting-hate-platforms-ad-placement-problem>

⁵ https://counterhate.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Toxic-Twitter_FINAL.pdf

⁶ <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/profitting-hate-platforms-ad-placement-problem>

⁷ <https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1600944225964593152?s=10&t=wMnJ6GwHZjsU2xv2qkfuPA>

However, we continue to write to you in hopes of gaining insight into your recent decisions and a better understanding of the internal mechanisms X is using to combat misinformation.

As we approach another pivotal election, it is imperative that you and your leadership take election integrity seriously and prioritize a robust election integrity team. Thus, we are seeking the following information about your platform's plans for election integrity and the capability of your workforce to implement and enforce your policies.

1. What is the current makeup of the election integrity team and how does that compare to the election integrity team that existed before you took over?
2. If recent reports are accurate, please explain the reasoning behind cutting the election integrity team reportedly in half. If these reports are inaccurate, please provide us with detailed information on recent staffing changes.
3. What is the company's current capability regarding handling the risks that may arise as a result of election misinformation? What is the current risk-assessment process and response timeline for election misinformation?
4. How has the rate of misleading political posts increased or decreased in the months leading up to a U.S. presidential election? If it has historically increased, how do you intend to handle this increase ahead of the 2024 election?
5. How many users on X have previously used the feature that allowed users to report misleading political posts? How many times was it used prior to being disabled? Who made the decision to disable this feature and why?
6. How do you intend to measure the spread of election misinformation without this feature in place?

We look forward to hearing your responses.

Sincerely,



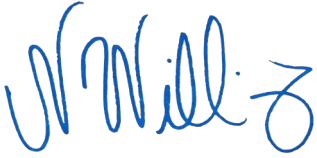
Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress