Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 4, 2022

Ms. Susan Wojcicki
Chief Executive Officer
YouTube, Inc.
1000 Cherry Ave
San Bruno, CA 94066

Dear Ms. Wojcicki,

We write to express our serious concern with the continued lack of action and transparency on the part of YouTube regarding the spread of Spanish-language misinformation and disinformation on its platform, particularly as it pertains to the upcoming midterm elections.

False and misleading information online inflicts serious damage when it comes to issues like vaccination, reproductive health care, and election misinformation. In particular, we are deeply troubled by reports that Spanish-language misinformation and disinformation continue to find a home on your platform.[1,2] These false narratives have reportedly found widespread foothold on YouTube, including on channels with over a million subscribers that remained active for years, with YouTube only terminating the channels after public reporting. Reports of recently emerging false narratives across other social media platforms also reinforce the urgency of this issue, including a disturbing rise in the prevalence of abortion-related mis/disinformation targeting Latinas across social media platforms[3] following the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

It is critical that YouTube prioritize platform safety and content moderation for non-English speakers on the platform. However, despite repeated assurances that this is a top priority for the company,[4,5] reporting on rampant misinformation spread on the platform continues. Furthermore, while YouTube has assured members of Congress that it is working on publicly releasing more of its core accountability metrics (such as its Violative View Rate) for non-English languages[6], we do not believe the company has delivered on those commitments. The lack of progress here raises serious concerns that YouTube does not prioritize

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[1] M. Estrada, "Dozens of Spanish-language election fraud YouTube videos demonstrate the platform's toothless policies ", *MediaMatters*, October 10th 2022, https://www.mediamatters.org/spanish-language-media/dozens-spanish-language-election-fraud-youtube-videos-demonstrate-platforms

[2] M. Estrada, "Despite policies, election misinformation persists on YouTube", *MediaMatters*, August 17th, 2022, https://www.mediamatters.org/spanish-language-media/despite-policies-election-misinformation-persists-spanish-youtube

[3] Maria Godoy, "Latina immigrants may be exposed to Spanish-language disinformation about abortion", *NPR*, October 12th, 2022, https://www.npr.org/2022/10/12/1128312538/latina-immigrants-may-be-exposed-to-spanish-language-disinformation-about-aborti

[4] Social Media's Impact on Homeland Security, *US Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs*, September 14th, 2022, https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/social-medias-impact-on-homeland-security

[5] Protecting Kids Online: Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube, *U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation*, October 26th, 2021, https://www.commerce.senate.gov/2021/10/protecting-kids-online-snapchat-tiktok-and-youtube

[6] Christiano Lamo, Hispanic caucus pushes YouTube chief for data on misinformation in Spanish, *The Washington Post*, April 29th, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/04/29/hispanic-caucus-pushes-youtube-chief-data-spanish-language-misinformation/

safeguarding trust in our democracy across non-English and Spanish speaking communities, despite assurances to the public and members of Congress to the contrary.

Forty-seven percent of Latinos have indicated that they turn to YouTube as a source of news "often" on a weekly basis.[7] False election information erodes trust in our democratic process with possible repercussions ranging from depressed voter turnout to political violence. It is critical that YouTube prioritize this pressing concern at a staffing and organizational level to address this issue.

In line with YouTube's stated commitment to safety across non-English languages, we request the following information regarding the steps that your company is taking to combat mis/disinformation:

1. In line with past statements and commitments, when will YouTube release additional safety metrics broken down across non-English languages?

2. YouTube has stated it employs more than 20,000 employees reviewing and removing misinformation on your platform.
   - How many content-moderators does YouTube employ specifically designated to review non-English language content?
   - How many employees are specifically reviewing and removing Spanish-language content?
   - What steps has YouTube taken to ensure that employees tasked with non-English content moderation are able to cover a wide range of regional dialects and cultures?

3. Your community guidelines prohibit content that "contradicts expert consensus on certain safe medical practices." Are abortion procedures covered under this guideline, and if so, have Spanish language misinformation videos on the efficacy, safety and accessibility of these procedures been targeted for removal by your content moderators?

4. Besides content moderation staffing, what other processes have been put in place to track Spanish-language misinformation and disinformation related to election and reproductive health care? Please share any newly adopted technologies for detection, analysis and automatic removal.

5. How does YouTube determine when updates are needed for its policy? How often do these reviews occur?

6. What efforts has YouTube taken to educate viewers about the videos including misinformation and disinformation? Are disclaimers or warnings issued to viewers on particular disinformation content?

7. YouTube has previously shared it has been looking at ways to decrease the spread of "borderline content." This is content that does not violate quite YouTube's policy but is problematic. Is YouTube still considering disabling the share button or breaking the link on "borderline content" videos?

We look forward to your responses, which we request by November 21st, 2022.

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[7] Latino Misinformation: Exposure & Risk, *Equis*, https://assets.ctfassets.net/ms6ec8hcu35u/33moZ9yGGfgeS05fashev5/06a6a735a43fe54dcd606e17c42fcdaf/Equis_Misinformation_Poll_June_2022.pdf
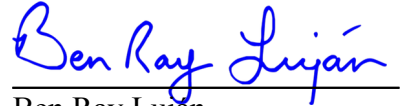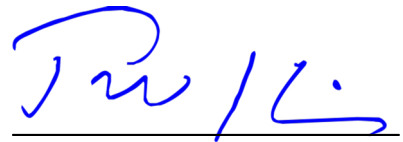
Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
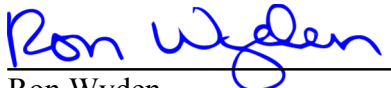United States Senator

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

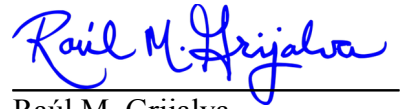Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
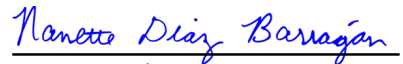United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Raúl M. Grijalva
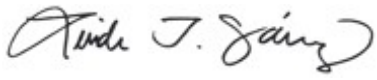Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress
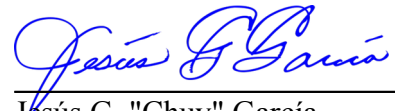
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
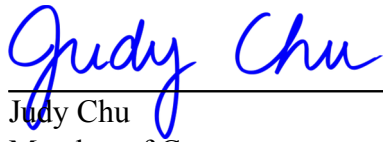Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress