

Congress to question US internet giants over disinformation

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The chiefs of Facebook, Google and Twitter are slated to testify on March 25 at a US congressional hearing on misinformation plaguing online platforms.

Mark Zuckerberg, Sundar Pichai and Jack Dorsey will take part in a remote video hearing coordinated jointly by two Congress subcommittees, one devoted to communications and technology and the other to [consumer protection](#) and commerce, the political bodies announced on Thursday.

The subject of the hearing will be [online misinformation](#) and disinformation.

"Whether it be falsehoods about the Covid-19 vaccine or debunked claims of election fraud, these [online platforms](#) have allowed misinformation to spread, intensifying national crises with real-life, grim consequences for [public health](#) and safety," the heads of the committees said in a release.

"For far too long, big tech has failed to acknowledge the role they've played in fomenting and elevating blatantly [false information](#) to its online audiences."

Announcement of the hearing came the same day that Facebook said it would expand its climate information hub and direct its users to experts to debunk myths and hoaxes in the field in a ramped up effort to fight misinformation.

The social media giant said it has added a section to its climate hub that features "facts that debunk common climate myths" and will rely on climate communication experts from George Mason University, the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and the University of Cambridge.

Major online platforms have remained under fire for enabling political misinformation and manipulation, notably during election periods.

Zuckerberg said last month Facebook is seeking to "turn down the temperature" on its sprawling platform by reducing the kind of divisive and inflammatory political talk it has long hosted.

Zuckerberg, Pichai, and Dorsey have testified before at congressional hearings, as legislative scrutiny ramps up on their companies over concerns about their power and practices around handling of misinformation.

Meanwhile, political conservatives accuse social media platforms of stifling free speech with moves such as fact-checking or removing accounts that spread debunked and dangerous information.

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