

All social media platforms have TikTok-like risks, transparency group says

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The national-security and mental-health risks posed by TikTok are shared by other social media platforms, according to an advocacy group that's urging Congress to also hold U.S. companies accountable ahead of

high-profile testimony from TikTok's chief executive officer.

The Tech Oversight Project, a nonprofit, says Meta Platforms Inc., Alphabet Inc.'s Google, Apple Inc. and Amazon.com Inc. employ the same harmful business practices as TikTok and are increasingly copying some of the video-sharing app's design features.

All of these platforms have "force fed children dangerous and harmful content with predatory algorithms, aided U.S. adversaries and worked against U.S. national interests at home and abroad, and failed to protect users' personal data," the group says in a memo shared with Bloomberg News.

While the memo is sharply critical of TikTok, it echoes some of that company's arguments that lawmakers should focus on general data practices, rather than the Chinese ownership of TikTok's [parent company](#), ByteDance Ltd. This argument is likely to feature prominently in the testimony of TikTok CEO Shou Chew when he appears before the House Energy and Commerce Committee on Thursday.

TikTok's critics say its Chinese ownership gives the government in Beijing special authority to obtain user data and manipulate the platform despite promised safeguards.

Congress is considering several proposals that could limit TikTok's U.S. operations, which is happening in parallel with the Biden administration's national security review of the platform. The Justice Department, along with other [government agencies](#) that make up the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S., has rejected TikTok's multilayered plan to protect U.S. users from Chinese influence.

The White House has urged Congress to focus on passing one bipartisan Senate bill that would give the administration the authority to evaluate

and mitigate the national security risk of any adversary-owned technology such as TikTok.

Spokespeople for Meta, Google, Amazon and Apple didn't respond to requests for comment. The Tech Oversight Project is funded by private philanthropy including the Omidyar Network and Economic Security Project Action.

Some lawmakers have already questioned why TikTok is being singled out when the abuses of U.S. social media companies are well documented.

Sen. Ed Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat, urged Congress this month to "take this TikTok issue and broaden it to look at what U.S. companies are doing." Sen. Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat, said Congress should focus on a "comprehensive policy that starts closing the gaps" in privacy protections online.

The Tech Oversight Project not only outlines the oft-reported mental health impact of all social media, but also argues that U.S. companies don't handle [user data](#) responsibly and can be used to spread Chinese propaganda. The memo lists news reports tying some of the largest U.S. tech firms to Chinese influence, such as hosting state-owned media without proper disclosure and supply-chain dependence on Chinese companies.

Major U.S. tech companies have publicly laid low as TikTok fights off congressional attempts to ban the platform in the U.S. Social-media stocks such as Snap Inc. and Meta have traded higher on news reports of their chief competitor facing scrutiny in Washington.

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