

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

July 6, 2021

Mr. Sundar Pichai
Chief Executive Officer
Google Inc.
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Pichai,

Republicans on the House Oversight and Reform Committee write today to request information about the safety and data collection practices by Google Inc. (Google) of students, teachers, and academic institutions. As we know, the coronavirus pandemic shifted students to online schooling almost overnight. Schools were left scrambling to provide access to education for students, especially students in underserved communities. More than 50 million students, teachers, and administrators utilize Google's classroom system and it is unclear what data is being collected from children and how it is being used.¹

Google Classroom (part of the G Suite for Education) is a free web service developed by Google to help schools streamline the process of sharing files between teachers and students. Students using Google Classroom can view assignments, submit homework, and receive grades from teachers to help them stay on track and organized. The G Suite for Education core services includes Gmail, Calendar, Classroom, Contacts, Drive, Docs, Groups, Sheets, Sites, Slides, Talk/Hangouts, and Vault.

Children continue to spend increased time online as schools remain shuttered across the country. Parents should be able to protect their children online and monitor their activities to ensure they are not accessing inappropriate content or being targeted in any way. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Of particular concern, is the lack of clarity surrounding parental consent for collection of personally identifiable information such as geolocation.² While Google's terms state that parents can request access to their student's data, export it, and request it be deleted through the school administrator, it is not clear how accessible this option is or how easily it can be done.³ Google states that each of their agreements with an academic institution is unique, which could complicate protecting student's data overall.

¹*Standard Privacy Report for Google Classroom*, COMMON SENSE PRIVACY PROGRAM (Dec. 15, 2020)
<https://privacy.commonsense.org/evaluation/Google-Classroom>

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

While Google's terms state that the data collected is not sold to third parties, the data can still be transferred to the third parties.⁴ We are interested to learn more about how this data, collected from academic institutions, students, and educators, is utilized by Google and whether Google is protecting student's data from improper use.

In order to help us better understand how Google protects students, the data Google collects from academic institutions, students, and teachers, and how it is being utilized, please provide the following documents and information by July 20, 2021:

1. The number of academic institutions who have contracted with Google to utilize any or all of the programs offered under Google Classroom or other G Suite for Education programs.
2. A list of all types of data Google collects from academic institutions, students, and teachers who utilize Google Classroom or other G Suite for Education programs.
3. A detailed explanation of the safeguards Google has in place to protect students from exposure to improper content while using any program in Google Classroom or other G Suite for Education programs.
4. A list of steps parents can take to ensure their students are not exposed to inappropriate content and what steps parents can take in the event their child is exposed to inappropriate content.
5. A list of all third parties who have access to data collected by Google from academic institutions, students, and teachers.
6. Whether Google profits from any of the data collected from academic institutions, students, or teachers.
7. All documents outlining the procedures for utilization of data collected from academic institutions, students, and teachers is utilized by Google.
8. Procedures academic institutions, students, and teachers can utilize to opt out of Google's data collection and utilization.
9. Is the data collected by Google from academic institutions, students, and teachers compared to and compiled with existing data held by Google?

In addition to the above documents and information, we request a staff-level briefing no later than July 13, 2021. The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight

⁴ *Id.*

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committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



Michael Cloud
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic and
Consumer Policy



James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform



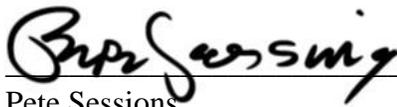
Jody Hice
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government Operations



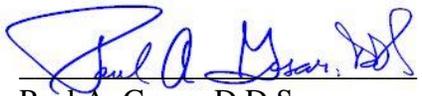
Glen Grothman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security



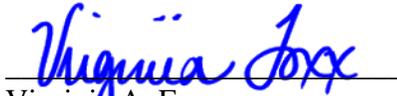
Ralph Norman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment



Pete Sessions
Ranking Member
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Civil Liberties



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Virginia A. Foxx
Member of Congress



Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress



Fred Keller
Member of Congress

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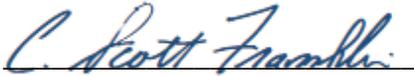
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Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



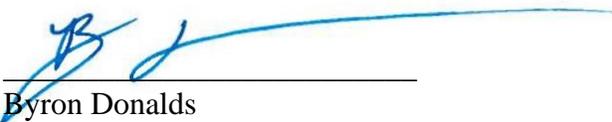
Andrew S. Clyde
Member of Congress



Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Pat Fallon
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

The Honorable Ro Khanna
Subcommittee on Environment

The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Chairman
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties