

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 10, 2022

Mr. Timothy R. Cadogan
Chief Executive Officer
GoFundMe Inc.
855 Jefferson Avenue, PO Box 1329
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Mr. Cadogan:

We write to conduct oversight over GoFundMe Inc.'s (GoFundMe) recent decision to remove one particular campaign—the Canadian truckers' campaign—from its website and get a detailed accounting of how the company is dealing with undistributed donations collected on its platform totaling millions of dollars. Understandably, citizens across the globe are speaking out against many of the limitations on individual freedom being imposed under the guise of COVID restrictions, which many of these same elected leaders mandate on others yet don't even follow themselves. And even in the United States—the freest country in the world—the Biden Administration continues to harm countless Americans by perpetuating unscientific COVID-19 policies and fears. We are concerned that GoFundMe is censoring individuals who are peacefully challenging the science and merits of some of these COVID mandates, while also signaling to any others who dare speak out that their voices will be silenced.

In recent weeks, a protest movement led by Canadian truckers formed in Canada with the goal of objecting to restrictive COVID-19 mandates, including the fact that both the United States and Canada now require truckers crossing their borders to be vaccinated against COVID-19.¹ A GoFundMe page supporting these essential workers was established and quickly raised millions of dollars.² This “Freedom Convoy 2022” page was active until it was abruptly shut down by GoFundMe on February 4, 2022.³

In addition to shutting down the Freedom Convoy 2022 solicitations page, GoFundMe unilaterally decreed that “no further funds will be directly distributed to the Freedom Convoy organizers.”⁴ Instead of simply refunding the money, GoFundMe stated that it would force the Freedom Convoy organizers to “send all remaining funds to credible and established charities...

¹ Coletta, Amanda & Adela Suliman, *A self-described 'Freedom Convoy' of Canadian truckers opposed to vaccine mandate arrives in Ottawa*, WASH. POST (Jan. 28, 2022).

² *Id.*

³ *GoFundMe Statement on the Freedom Convoy 2022 Fundraiser (2/4/2022)*, available at <https://medium.com/gofundme-stories/update-gofundme-statement-on-the-freedom-convoy-2022-fundraiser-4ca7e9714e82> (last accessed Feb. 8, 2022).

⁴ *Id.*

verified by GoFundMe.”⁵ Donors who did not wish their funds to be summarily directed elsewhere without their consent were only given until February 19, 2022—approximately two weeks—to submit a refund form request.⁶ Only after a public outcry and amid threats of investigations⁷ did GoFundMe reverse course. The company issued an update on February 5, 2022, indicating that it would “automatically refund all contributions directly” without donors needing to submit an additional request.⁸

GoFundMe publicly justified these actions by claiming that it had received evidence from unidentified local officials that “the previously peaceful demonstration has become an occupation, with police reports of violence and other unlawful activity.”⁹ It appears that GoFundMe simply obeyed requests from local “city officials” who disagreed with the protests and acted at their behest to remove the Freedom Convoy 2022 page from its platform.¹⁰ Yet, the *New York Times* has described the protests as “boisterous” but “mostly peaceful and festive.”¹¹

GoFundMe has *not* taken similar action against other crowdfunded pages in support of left-leaning protest movements, including those with connections to violence such as bail funds for rioters during the Summer of 2020.¹² GoFundMe even permitted support for the Antifa-occupied CHOP zone in Seattle, Washington.¹³ Committee Republicans are concerned that GoFundMe’s policies are not being executed in a just manner. As we have seen, for some in the Big Tech industry, far-left violence is merely speech, while conservative speech is treated as violence.

Big Tech is increasingly refusing to permit a level playing field in the marketplace of ideas, actively censoring conservative viewpoints while promoting far-left causes. And we are particularly interested in this case where millions of dollars in crowdsourced funds would have potentially been misappropriated absent a public outcry.

To assist the Republicans on the Committee in understanding GoFundMe’s decision to remove the Freedom Convoy 2022 account, as well as the disposition of millions of dollars in

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Folmar, Chloe, *DeSantis, state AGs pledge to investigate GoFundMe removing page for Canadian vaccine mandate protest*, THE HILL (Feb. 5, 2022).

⁸ UPDATE: *GoFundMe to refund all Freedom Convoy 2022 donations* (2/5/2022), available at <https://medium.com/gofundme-stories/update-gofundme-statement-on-the-freedom-convoy-2022-fundraiser-4ca7e9714e82> (last accessed Feb. 8, 2022).

⁹ *GoFundMe Statement on the Freedom Convoy 2022 Fundraiser* (2/4/2022), available at <https://medium.com/gofundme-stories/update-gofundme-statement-on-the-freedom-convoy-2022-fundraiser-4ca7e9714e82> (last accessed Feb. 8, 2022).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Austen, Ian & Vjosa Isai, *Truck Protest Against Pandemic Measures Spreads Across Canada*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 5, 2022).

¹² See Knutson, Jacob, *Millions are donated to bail out arrested George Floyd protesters*, AXIOS (Jun. 27, 2020).

¹³ Shaw, Adam, *GoFundMe, now nixing Canadian trucker fundraiser, promoted Capitol Hill Occupied Protest appeal*, FOX NEWS (Feb. 6, 2022).

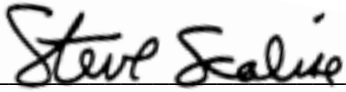
undistributed donations, please provide the following documents and information, no later than February 24, 2022:

1. All documents and communications relating to the decision to remove the Freedom Convoy 2022 page from GoFundMe Inc.'s website.
2. All policy manuals, terms and conditions, or other terms of service relied on by GoFundMe Inc. in making its decision to remove the Freedom Convoy 2022 page from GoFundMe Inc.'s website.
3. An explanation of how GoFundMe enforces its policies, terms and conditions among users of its platform, together with an explanation of past enforcement practice and how affected donations were distributed.
4. All documents and communications relating to the decision to divert funds donated to the Freedom Convoy 2022 page "to credible and established charities" as indicated in the February 4, 2022, statement.
5. All documents and communications relating to the decision to refund all donors the full amount of their donations as indicated in the February 5, 2022, statement.
6. A complete accounting of all funds raised in relation to the Freedom Convoy 2022 page on GoFundMe's website, as well as the disposition of such funds disaggregated by donor.

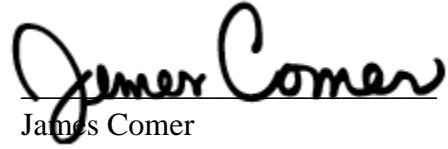
Thank you for your cooperation with us on this important issue. To make arrangements to deliver documents or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Reform Republican Staff at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. Further, the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis is empowered to investigate "preparedness for and response to the coronavirus crisis, including the planning for and implementation of testing, containment, mitigation, and surveillance activities."¹⁴ Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

¹⁴ H. Res. 935 § 3(a)(4) (2020).

Sincerely,



Steve J. Scalise
Ranking Member
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis



James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight & Reform

cc: The Honorable James E. Clyburn, Chairman
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney, Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight & Reform