

Risk Audit on Content Censorship

RESOLVED:

Shareholders request that Alphabet Inc. (“Company”) issue a report at reasonable cost – omitting proprietary or legally privileged information – reviewing the vulnerabilities of its enforcement of Google’s and YouTube’s Terms of Service related to content policies, and assessing the risks posed by content management controversies related to issues such as election interference, freedom of expression, and inequitable application of policies, and how they affect the Company’s finances, operations, and reputation.

SUPPORTING STATEMENT:

Evidence has accumulated over many years that show Alphabet Inc.’s platforms discriminate against disfavored speech, interfered in elections, and is undeniably prejudiced. Major examples include:

- In leaked Company emails, employees discussed using “ephemeral experiences” to change users’ views. Back in 2016, the Company’s chief financial officer said, “we will use the great strength and resources and reach we have” to advance Google’s values. Consequentially, senior research psychologist Dr. Robert Epstein found that – based on 1.5 million search experiences his team aggregated in 2020 – that the Company’s manipulations could have shifted up to six million votes to Joe Biden.¹
- A study of voter outreach by 2020 political candidates, conducted by North Carolina State University’s Department of Computer Science, found that Google’s Gmail “marked 59.3% more emails from [conservative] candidates as spam compared to the [progressive] candidates.”²
- The Republican National Committee claimed that Gmail sent more than 22 million of its emails to spam during a critical fundraising period in the 2022 election cycle. The Company has incurred a lawsuit and a complaint to the Federal Elections Commission due to the alleged suppression.³
- A Media Research Center analysis of the most tightly contested 2022 U.S. Senate races found that ten of 12 Republican candidates’ campaign websites (83%) appeared far lower (or did not appear at all) on page one of Google’s organic search results, compared to their Senate Democratic Party opponents’ campaign websites.⁴

¹ Epstein, Dr. Robert. “Google Is Shifting Votes On A Massive Scale, But A Solution Is At Hand,” Daily Caller, Nov. 6, 2022. See <https://bit.ly/3EY7AFW>.

² “A Peek into the Political Biases in Email Spam Filtering Algorithms During US Election 2020.” See <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2203.16743.pdf>.

³ “RNC Files Lawsuit Against Google,” Republican National Committee press release, Oct. 21, 2022. See <https://bit.ly/3Xrmtlg>.

⁴ Pariseau, Gabriela. “Google CAUGHT Manipulating Search, Buries GOP Campaign Sites in 83% of Top Senate Races.” Newsbusters, Oct. 25, 2022. See <https://bit.ly/3UUxmAF>.

In addition to the above examples, the Company is the target of a credible, major lawsuit by the states of Missouri and Louisiana, based on extensive evidence that the Company violated users' First Amendment rights.

Shareholders need to know whether the Company is engaged in unconstitutional censorship, and whether the Company exercises its content moderation in violation of its Terms of Service, opening the Company to liability claims by victims. Shareholders also need to know whether the Company is failing to disclose these potential liabilities as material risks in its public filings. There is currently no single source providing shareholders the information sought by this resolution.