Chairman Gallagher Remarks

Press Conference to Introduce the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act – 3/6/24

as prepared for delivery

Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for being here to learn more about the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act. I would like to give a special thank you to our Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi who helped make this bill a bipartisan success, to the Administration for working collaboratively on this important piece of legislation, and the National Security Council for their statement of support.

Yesterday, ten democrats and ten republicans came together to introduce a bill that would prohibit TikTok from operating in the US unless it severs its ties to ByteDance or any other entity controlled by the Chinese Communist Party.

This is not a step that the Republicans and Democrats behind this podium take lightly. We speak with one voice and carry the same message as the Directors of the DIA, FBI, CIA, NSA, and the head of U.S. Cyber Command — TikTok is a threat to U.S. national security.

Before we open up the floor to questions, I want to take this opportunity to speak directly to Americans who might have legitimate questions about this bill.

Whether you're a mom worried about your kids using a new social media app, or a college freshman on TikTok to connect with new friends, I say this: If you value your personal freedom and privacy online, if you care about America's national security at home, and, yes, even if you want TikTok to stick around in the United States – this bill offers the only real step towards each of these goals.

Let me explain why.

TikTok is based in China. In China, there is no such thing as a private company. The ruling authority – the Chinese Communist Party – and its leader Xi Jinping, have their hands deep in the inner workings of the company, with devastating consequences for our own personal freedoms.

In compliance with Chinese law, TikTok's parent company – Bytedance – is legally required to support the work of the Chinese Communist Party. Under ByteDance's ownership structure, the Chinese government has the ability to manipulate TikTok's algorithm. Surveil its users. And conduct influence operations that quietly populate Americans' 'For You' pages.

This is a problem because TikTok isn't just an app for funny dance videos – it's the predominant news source for Americans under age 30. Allowing a CCP-controlled entity like TikTok to become the dominant media player in America would be like if, in 1962, right before the Cuban Missile Crisis, we had allowed Pravda and the KGB to purchase The New York Times, The Washington Post, ABC, and NBC.

But there is a path forward for TikTok.

As outlined in our bipartisan bill, if TikTok is completely divested by CCP-controlled Bytedance, the app can remain in the United States.

Through this bill we want to ensure divestment, not censorship. If an entity other than a CCP-controlled entity owns TikTok, Americans can still share whatever content they like- no matter how bad the dance moves may be. They'll have the same freedom of expression. But what they'll also have is freedom of thought—rather than the manipulation of content via the communist party algorithm that currently exists.

For TikTok's users, employees, and investors, this bill provides the only path for the app to continue its operations in the U.S. without threatening Americans' online freedom, privacy, and security.

We need this bill because we simply cannot continue to allow an app controlled by our nation's foremost adversary to take over the American media landscape.

We cannot place the hearts and minds of the next generation in the hands of a Communist aggressor – We must act.

I urge the rest of our colleagues in the House, in the Senate and the Executive Branch to take up this bipartisan call to protect our national security and pass this bill into law. And now I'd like to invite our Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi to say a few words.