



April 23, 2021

Senator Gary Farmer  
Minority Leader  
Florida State Senate

Representative Bobby DuBose  
Minority Leader  
Florida House of Representatives

Dear Minority Leader Farmer and Minority Leader DuBose:

As a business group devoted to a progressive future, we write to urge your **strong and vocal opposition** to **SB 7072** and **HB 7013**, companion Republican bills that should be renamed the “**Incentivize Online Disinformation and Hate Speech Act.**”

Our organization, the Chamber of Progress ([progresschamber.org](http://progresschamber.org)), is a new center-left tech industry coalition promoting technology’s progressive future. We work to ensure that all Americans benefit from technological leaps, and that the tech industry operates responsibly and fairly. I am a longtime Democratic political aide, and our Advisory Board is composed of Democrats in government, civil society, and industry.

Our organization’s commitment to a progressive society, economy, and workforce sets us apart from other business groups. For example, we strongly oppose legislation to curtail voting rights; support President Biden’s proposed corporate tax increase to fund infrastructure investments; back a national emissions reduction target of 50% by 2030; and support a stronger social safety net.

We also strongly support **healthy online communities** -- free of hoaxes, conspiracy theories, hate speech, incitement to violence, and election- and vaccine-related disinformation. That’s why we strongly oppose SB 2072 and HB 7013, which **would tie online services’ hands in the fight against toxic, incendiary content.**

- **These bills would cause social media services to be overrun with disinformation and conspiracy theories.** The bills’ requirement to “apply censorship, deplatforming, and shadow banning standards *in a consistent manner* among users on the platform” would impose a false impartiality standard that would hobble platforms’ constitutional freedom to remove or downrank QAnon conspiracies, vaccine disinformation, or President Trump’s election “Big Lie.” For example, a “consistent manner” rule would effectively prohibit Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook from removing an obviously false claim that a local elected official drank children’s blood.
- **These bills would leave social media platforms flat-footed against fast-developing domestic terrorists and hate group attacks.** In addition to the “consistent manner” rule’s hobbling of sensible content moderation, the bill also prohibits online platforms from making any changes to its content moderation policies “more than once every 30 days.” As a result, a domestic terror group promoting a previously unseen conspiracy theory would always be able to outrun social platforms’ ability to detect and stop new threats online.

- **These bills would give Russian trolls more tools to interfere with our elections.** Multiple federal investigations have clearly established the Russian government’s sophisticated online disinformation campaign to interfere in the 2016, 2018, and 2020 U.S. elections. While the bills’ requirement that social platforms “publish the standards, including detailed definitions, it uses or has used for determining how to censor, deplatform, and shadow ban” could aid transparency, it would also enable new waves of Russian government trolls to devise new strategies to evade platforms’ evolving rules. And if social media platforms remove Russia Today (RT) content claiming that Donald Trump won the election, the bill would allow the platform to be sued by RT for censoring content as a “journalistic enterprise.”
- **These bills would allow political leaders to foment insurrection, tying platforms hands to act.** President Trump used his Twitter and Facebook accounts to encourage the lie that the election was stolen, and to encourage his supporters to foment insurrection. The January 6 attacks on the Capitol that left four people dead and threatened our democratic process spurred social platforms’ unprecedented action to deactivate Trump’s accounts. But these bills’ prohibition on removing speech by political candidates would give free reign to future Trump-like figures to use social media to stir another violent insurrection. While platforms don’t relish restraining political leaders’ speech, the extraordinary events of January 6 proved the need for them to act in extreme cases of political violence.

Technology services have helped advance progressive goals -- democratizing access to goods and information, giving voice to the marginalized, and supporting millions of high-quality jobs. Wikipedia let anyone with an internet connection become an armchair expert on the topic of their choice. Amazon and eBay brought e-commerce to the masses. And social media facilitated conversations between friends and strangers across vast distances.

But no one wants the Internet to become a cesspool of hate and lies, and that’s why online services must retain the freedom to moderate healthy online communities -- **including taking action against incendiary or hateful content**. In severely limiting services’ ability to to remove or downrank the most egregious speech online today, these bills would only **incentivize people to spread hate and lies online**.

The Republican majority is advancing these measures despite their obvious violation of the Constitution and First Amendment. For the sake of history it’s vital to speak up against the harmful intent and impact of these bills.

We urge you and all of your Democratic colleagues in the Senate and House of Representatives to stand in **strong and vocal opposition** to these measures.

Sincerely,



Adam Kovacevich  
CEO and Founder  
Chamber of Progress