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November 14, 2019

Mark Zuckerberg
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Facebook, Inc.
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg:

I write today in response to continued reports of Facebook's failure to stem the tide of dangerous myths about vaccinations and other health care services on your platform. I have further become extremely concerned that Facebook's policy on political speech has created a loophole that would allow the spread of health misinformation to go unchecked. I urge you to take immediate responsibility for your platform's ongoing role in promoting harmful lies that negatively impact Americans' health and well-being.

As you are already well aware, our nation is in the midst of a dangerous resurgence of measles and an increase in other diseases that are preventable by vaccines. The Centers for Disease Control reports that in 2019 alone, 1250 cases of measles have been confirmed across 36 states, including 19 cases in my state of New Jersey. As a result, the United States nearly lost our designation by the World Health Organization as a "measles elimination" country. This public health crisis has been fueled, in part, by misinformation about vaccine safety spread via Facebook ads.

In response to public outcry, in March 2019 Facebook purportedly banned ads promoting misinformation about the safety and efficacy of vaccines. Four months later, on July 11, 2019, my staff spoke to your employees and were told Facebook was deploying tools to address these false ads. However, as was recently reported in the *Daily Beast*, Facebook has continued to allow anti-vaccination ads to flourish on the site and erroneously removed numerous legitimate public health ads about vaccines.

In light of recent news reports on the ongoing existence of anti-vaxxer propaganda on your platform, my staff and yours spoke on a call on November 6, 2019. After that second call I remain concerned about gaps in your efforts to ensure the veracity of content on your site and I am formally requesting the following information from Facebook:

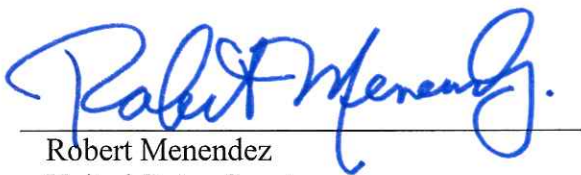
1. How many Facebook users have been exposed to anti-vaccine ads since March 2019, when you announced that such content would be prohibited on your platform?
2. How many anti-vaccine ads has Facebook taken down since March 2019?
3. How many vaccine-related ads has Facebook taken down erroneously since March 2019?

Additionally, I am profoundly disturbed by Facebook's policy on political speech and the potentially dangerous implications for the spread of health misinformation. According to a September 24, 2019 press release, Facebook exempts politicians' content, including ads, from third-party fact-checking. The fact-checking process, which is meant to staunch the flow of false news on your platform, contains a curious loophole exclusively for politicians. Given the tenor of our political times and the public health challenges we face, I fear that politicians could use this loophole to spread health misinformation. In light of these concerns, please address the following questions:

1. Could a politician run an advertisement on Facebook that includes health misinformation?
2. Could a politician run an advertisement linking vaccines to autism?
3. Could a politician run an advertisement linking abortion care to breast cancer?
4. Could a politician run an advertisement linking abortion care to increased rates of suicide?
5. Could a politician run an advertisement linking abortion care to future infertility and/or miscarriage?
6. Could a politician run an advertisement claiming that a fetus can feel pain at 20 weeks?
7. Could a politician run an advertisement claiming that emergency contraception causes an abortion?
8. Does Facebook allow crisis pregnancy centers to advertise on its platforms?
9. Are there any health-related exceptions to Facebook's political speech policy? If so, please provide a list of all such exceptions.
10. Does Facebook ensure that health care groups run by providers and their affiliated partners disclose their relationships?

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Robert Menendez
United States Senator