

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 5, 2020

Sundar Pichai
Chief Executive Officer
Google LLC
1600 Amphitheater Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Pichai,

On August 6, 2020, Senators Ron Johnson and Mike Lee wrote you regarding your testimony to the House Committee on the Judiciary in which you stated, *“We won’t do any work, you know, to politically tilt anything one way or the other. It’s against our core values.”*¹ In your response to the letter, you reiterated this assertion and further stated, *“Google does not modify any products, including Search, to promote a particular political viewpoint...[we] will not do so for the upcoming 2020 presidential election.”*²

On November 4, 2020, Senator Johnson spoke with Dr. Robert Epstein to determine if his 2020 Election monitoring of Google’s activities had uncovered anything that could be viewed as promoting a particular political viewpoint. Dr. Epstein provided Senator Johnson the following response.

In our election monitoring project this year, we recruited a politically-diverse group of 733 field agents in Arizona, Florida, and North Carolina. Through their computers, we were able to preserve more than 400,000 ephemeral experiences that tech companies use to shift opinions and votes and that normally are lost forever.

One of our most disturbing findings so far is that between Monday, October 26th (the day our system became fully operational) and Thursday, October 29th, only our liberal field agents received vote reminders on Google’s home page. Conservatives did not receive even a single vote reminder. This kind of targeting, if present nationwide, could shift millions of votes, in part because Google’s home page is seen 500 million times a day in the U.S.

The good news is that it appears that we got Google to stop this manipulation four days before Election Day. On Thursday, October 29th, I sent materials about the monitoring project to Ebony Bowden, a reporter at the New York Post, who was

¹ Letter from U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson and U.S. Sen. Michael Lee, to Mr. Sundar Pichai, Chief Exec. Officer, Google LLC (Aug. 6, 2020).

² Letter from Mr. Sundar Pichai, Chief Exec. Officer, Google LLC, to U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson and U.S. Sen. Michael Lee (Aug. 26, 2020).

writing a story about the project. I did so knowing that all nypost.com emails are shared with algorithms and employees at Google.[³]

Late night on the 29th, two notable things happened: First, Ms. Bowden's article, which was about possible large-scale election rigging by Big Tech, was pulled by the Post. Second, Google's targeted messaging stopped completely. From midnight on the 29th to the end of Election Day, all of our field agents have received the vote reminder. Because of the demographics of the people who use Google, this is still a vote manipulation, but it is far more benign than the extreme targeting we detected last week.[⁴]

Based on Dr. Epstein's response, it would appear your assertion that "*We won't do any work, you know, to politically tilt anything one way or the other*" is not true.

We will be asking Dr. Epstein to provide Congress with the evidence of Google's politically biased activities his monitoring collected during this election cycle. We are writing to provide you another opportunity to conduct a thorough review with your management team to determine the veracity of your previous responses to congressional inquiry regarding this issue, and correct your answers if necessary.

Please provide your response as soon as possible, but no later than 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 12, 2020.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Mike Lee
United States Senator

³ See Robert Epstein, How Major News Organizations, Universities, and Businesses Surrender Their Privacy to Google, THE DAILY CALLER (Aug. 27, 2018), available at <https://dailycaller.com/2018/08/27/surrender-privacy-google>.

⁴ See Robert Epstein, How Google Shifts Votes: A 'Go Vote' Reminder Is Not Always What You Think, THE EPOCH TIMES (Jan. 2, 2019), available at https://www.theepochtimes.com/another-way-google-manipulates-votes-without-us-knowing-a-go-vote-reminder-is-not-what-you-think-it-is_2754073.html.