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United States Senate

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September 6, 2016

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Mr. Kevin Systrom
Chief Executive Officer
Instagram
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Systrom:

On June 8, 2016, I contacted you regarding the troubling problem of elder abuse perpetuated through the use of social media. Those who commit these violations have used Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram to share photos and videos of nude and partially nude nursing home residents.

My office received your response describing Instagram's policies on user safety and the process for removal of prohibited content, which includes abusive and degrading photos. The Community Standards shared in your response state that aside from removal, content reviewers may report content that is troubling enough to warrant restricting the user's ability to post or institute a complete ban.

The protections and policies in place do seem to allow for screening of content to protect users as well as the subjects of photos, like the nursing home residents victimized by those who are supposed to assist them. However, it is unclear to what extent Instagram has terminated accounts based upon the posting of abusive or otherwise prohibited content. This information would provide a better sense of the volume of wrongful conduct discovered by Instagram and volume nation-wide that should be addressed by local, state, and federal agencies. Accordingly, please answer the following questions:

1. Approximately how many photos have been removed in the past three years for nudity or otherwise inappropriate or demeaning content? Of those, how many were associated with nursing home residents or the elderly?
2. How many accounts have been placed on restriction or terminated in the past three years? How many of those were as a result of offensive photos or videos? How many were associated with nursing home residents or the elderly?
3. With respect to question one and two, how many content removal, account restriction and termination actions were initiated by user referrals and how many by an independent review initiated by Instagram?
4. How many inappropriate posts led to a referral to law enforcement or other government agency in the past three years? How many were associated with nursing home residents or the elderly?

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this request. Please number your responses according to their corresponding questions and respond no later than September 21, 2016. If you have questions, please contact Josh Flynn-Brown of my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary