

CONGRESSMAN MATT GAETZ

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 11, 2018

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Congressman Matt Gaetz Grills Google CEO on Intentionally Silencing Conservatives

Washington, D.C. — U.S. Congressman Matt Gaetz (FL-01) today attended the House Judiciary Committee Hearing on “Transparency & Accountability: Examining Google and its Data Collection, Use, and Filtering Practices.” During the hearing, Rep. Gaetz pressed Sundar Pichai, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Google, about potential bias of Google employees. Rep. Gaetz’s questions cited an employee-only group named “Resist,” and reports that employees discussed modifying Google’s search algorithms to counter President Trump’s January 2017 travel ban.

A video and rough transcript of the exchange between Rep. Gaetz and Google CEO Sundar Pichai can be found below.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH REP. GAETZ’S REMARKS AT THE HEARING](#)



TRANSCRIPT

Rep. Gaetz: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have you ever launched an experiment on whether political bias has messed with consumer experience?

Google CEO: Through common sense, we look at them...

Rep. Gaetz: Have you specifically launched an investigation into political bias of your employees?

Google CEO: On our employees, you said?

Rep. Gaetz: Yes.

Google CEO: To the extent we always take any allegations on code of conduct across every issue seriously and we look into them.

Rep. Gaetz: You said to me yesterday that as a political bias, you haven't launched those investigations because there are so many redundancies and so much peer review that that would not be possible. Is that still your testimony today?

Google CEO: Congressman, it's the way our processes work. If you need to make a change in our algorithms, there are several steps in the process including launch committees and user testing and guideline evaluation.

Rep. Gaetz: But your company gets together and talks in groups, right, Google groups?

Google CEO: Yes, they can.

Rep. Gaetz: One of those groups is a civil rights group, right?

Google CEO: We have many in which they can be included in the conversation, yes.

Rep. Gaetz: Have you ever looked into the vista group?

Google CEO: Congressman, no.

Rep. Gaetz: Is that a surprise to you, that there is a resist group?

Google CEO: I'm not aware whether such a group exists or not.

Rep. Gaetz: If there was a resist group, would that be the type of thing you would want to look into?

Google CEO: We have clear policies around how our products are built and...

Rep. Gaetz: You know a resist group is a movement to resist the agenda of president trump. Is there a resist group in your company where a group of people, not one, are getting together to reduce that risk force, is that the type of thing you would want to investigate?

Google CEO: Congressman, I'm not aware of any such group, not that's been brought to my attention and I'm happy to follow up.

Rep. Gaetz: Mr. Chairman, I speak unanimous consent to enter into the record a document from what purports to be Google employee Myles Borens, which is opposed to the Google group resist. I am now reading about the discussion that occurred over Breitbart and Google ads and I'm report f reading from one of your employees who wanted to hold their nose over Breitbart and hate speech. Why would someone need to hold their nose over that work?

Google CEO: We have many employees and they communicate in forums as a company. We have allowed freedom of expression and we don't condone common expression in these things. We are very clear as to our policies of how we build our products, and we serve our publishers that way.

Rep. Gaetz: Well, if you haven't launched an investigation on any of your employees because it would take a group of employees to engage in improper conduct, and if those groups of employees are engaging in discussion on your platform, and if one of those platform groups is resist, and if on that resist movement site or any other sites on your platform.

There is talk of suppressing conservative speech, why wouldn't that be something you would launch an internal investigation in, publish those reports, sanction those employees that may or may not engaged in proper conduct so we can all be involved in the experience?

Google CEO: We have checks and balances of employees, not just on this issue, across any issue. We protect the sanctity of our systems and we would do that.

Rep. Gaetz: How can I have confidence that you're protecting the sanctity of your system when you don't even know your

employees are getting together on your own company's infrastructure to talk about political activity?

Google CEO: We always assume our systems are designed and we assume there could be issues. At any given moment, we assume that somebody may be acting in bad faith, and that's how we have designed our systems with all the protections in place. We need to do that for security of our systems and it's a first principle approach.

Rep. Gaetz: If your assumption is that people can act in bad faith, why, then, have you not launched an investigation into the communications that seem to indicate a desire to suppress conservative political movements and conservative voices?

Google CEO: If there are allegations around, you know, discussions which are specific with the intent of manipulating our products, we would conduct an investigation.

Rep. Gaetz: That's good to hear. The "Wall Street Journal reported that your workers were discussing tweaking search terms to frame the discussion over the travel ban. Did you perform an investigation into that allegation?

Google CEO: We looked into it. There was no attempted anything to influence our products. There are at times during important news events, for example, during events like hurricanes, we have a set of response crews. Even the Department of Homeland security was looking to put out information because there was confusion around the event. There was some discussion around things like that.

Rep. Gaetz: I would strongly suggest that one of the crisis response tools that you use is an investigation into the discourse of your employees on resisting the Trump Presidency, resisting the Trump agenda, and then smothering some of the conservative outlets that seem to amplify that content. I yield back Mr. Chairman.

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