

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 24, 2022

The Honorable Miguel Cardona  
Secretary of Education  
Department of Education Building  
400 Maryland Ave, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona,

I write regarding an October 8<sup>th</sup> letter that the National Education Association (NEA) sent to the leaders of Facebook (officially known as “Meta”), Twitter, and TikTok. This letter accused social-media platforms of spreading “misinformation” about unpopular school board policies. Specifically, this letter singled out “radicalized adults who falsely believe that graduate level courses about racism are being taught in K-12 public schools.” This statement appears to be a thinly veiled reference to parents who are concerned about critical race theory, a radical ideology that claims America is a fundamentally racist country and attributes moral characteristics to people on the basis of race. The letter also decried a “small yet vocal group of extremists who are putting the safety of our children, educators, and families at risk over the notion that wearing a mask is in infringement on personal liberty.”<sup>1</sup> NEA accused groups concerned about curricula based on critical race theory and restrictive mask policies of spreading “propaganda” and “lies” on social media and requested that social-media companies “stamp out” such speech.

The NEA’s letter is remarkably similar to a letter sent just nine days earlier by the National School Board Association (NSBA) to President Biden. In that letter, the NSBA smeared parents as potential “domestic terrorists” while singling out mask policies and critical race theory as the causes of disturbances at local school board meetings. The implication of both letters is the same: individuals opposed to critical race theory and mask mandates in schools are potential domestic terrorists.

Recent reporting indicates that you asked the NSBA to write its letter to President Biden.<sup>2</sup> Similarities in the timing and content of the NEA letter raise the troubling possibility that you or your staff may have had a hand in that letter, as well.

The Biden administration already has a concerning record of collaboration with tech giants and teachers unions, including the NEA. Just last year, the NEA, along with other powerful teachers unions, inappropriately influenced the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as it developed

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<sup>1</sup> Rebecca S. Pringle, “NEA’s letter to social media companies,” National Education Association, October 8, 2021, <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/leaders/president/from-our-president/neas-letter-social-media-companies>

<sup>2</sup> Peter Hasson, “Education Secretary Cardona solicited NSBA letter comparing protesting parents to domestic terrorists: email,” Fox News, January 11, 2022, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/education-secretary-cardona-solicited-nsba-letter-comparing-parents-domestic-terrorists-email>

guidance documents on school re-opening plans during the pandemic.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki acknowledged that the Biden administration has identified “problematic” posts for Facebook to censor because they allegedly contain “misinformation” about coronavirus.<sup>4</sup>

Big Tech’s potential censorship of concerned parents would be a chilling addition to the Biden administration’s efforts to intimidate parents seeking a greater role in their children’s education. Given these concerns, please respond to the following questions by January 31, 2022.

1. Did you, your staff, or any employee of the Department of Education solicit or otherwise encourage the National Education Association’s letter to the aforementioned social media companies?
2. Please provide all correspondence between your department and the National Education Association since January 21, 2021.
3. Have you or your staff ever requested that social media companies, including Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, monitor, censor, demote, or otherwise limit the distribution of social media posts and groups related to school policies?
4. Please provide all correspondence between your department and the three aforementioned social media companies, TikTok, Twitter, and Facebook since January 21, 2021.

Sincerely,



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Tom Cotton  
United States Senator

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<sup>3</sup> Joe Schoffstall, “White House considered teachers unions’ labor disputes before releasing reopening guidance, emails show,” Fox News, December 17, 2021, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/white-house-teachers-unions-labor-disputes-school-reopening-guidance-emails>; Joe Schoffstall, “CDC tightened masking guidelines after threats from teachers union, emails show,” Fox News, September 8, 2021, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/cdc-tightened-masking-guidelines-after-threats-from-teachers-union>

<sup>4</sup> Steven Nelson, “White House ‘flagging’ posts for Facebook to censor over COVID ‘misinformation’,” New York Post, July 15, 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/07/15/white-house-flagging-posts-for-facebook-to-censor-due-to-covid-19-misinformation/>