

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2018

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
House Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte,

We write to urge you to call the CEO of Facebook to testify before the House Committee on the Judiciary regarding Facebook's role in Cambridge Analytica's collection and use of private user data. Following reports that data mined from millions of Facebook user profiles was used to manipulate Americans during the 2016 presidential election, it is necessary that the House Committee on the Judiciary take a careful look at the involvement of large social media companies in this troubling overstep into Americans' private information.

According to a whistleblower, Cambridge Analytica, a data-based communications firm, collected personal data from over 50 million Facebook profiles prior to the 2016 presidential election. This information was then used by Cambridge Analytica to identify personality traits and lifestyle preferences that would help them create highly targeted political advertisements. Facebook allegedly knew about the third-party misappropriation of this data by late 2015 but failed to notify the affected individuals.

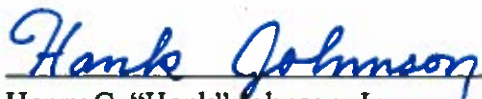
By collecting the private profile data of 50 million Facebook users, Cambridge Analytica gained valuable information about a vast swath of the American electorate. Final poll numbers from 2016 show that around 137.5 million people cast ballots in the presidential election, meaning that those affected by the data breach represent about 36 percent of all participating voters. While the benefit of social media companies like Facebook cannot be understated, we must also confront the impact of these massive platforms on the integrity of our elections and privacy of innocent American citizens.

Our Committee is charged with questions of American civil and criminal law, and is the appropriate venue for such a hearing that could raise questions implicating the Constitution, privacy rights, and election laws, among others. We have many unanswered questions about the impact of personal data use on election outcomes, the means by which this private information was acquired, and concerns regarding compliance with U.S. and international privacy agreements. The transparency garnered by such a hearing would help the House Committee on the Judiciary

achieve more coherent oversight personal data storage, use, and exchanges, and will ensure that all steps are taken to ensure free and fair elections.

In light of these recent reports and our growing concerns, we respectfully request that you call a hearing of the House Judiciary Committee where committee members can question the CEO of Facebook about the company's policies and procedures. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hank Johnson".

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hakeem Jeffries".

Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Bass".

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Cohen".

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress