June 23, 2016

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter of June 9, 2016 regarding what are positively heartbreaking incidents of elder abuse in nursing homes. We appreciate the opportunity to talk about Snapchat and the efforts we are taking to ensure a safe and respectful experience for everyone on our platform. At the outset, we want to assure you that a Snap taken of a person without their consent—similar to those described in your letter—would unmistakably violate our Community Guidelines and Terms of Service. We do not tolerate cruelty in our community.

Snapchat is one of the world's most popular apps to keep in touch with friends and creatively tell the stories of our daily lives. It's used in countless languages, by people of all backgrounds, and increasingly by world leaders and governments to engage with their constituents.

With over 100 million daily users sending 1 billion images and videos every day, the vast majority of activity on Snapchat is positive. While we always want Snapchatters to feel free to express themselves, we recognize that some content can be so vile that it will actually inhibit free expression and the robust creativity Snapchat encourages. That is why we have developed Community Guidelines and Terms of Service that categorically prohibit invasions of privacy, harassment, the exploitation of minors, and other unlawful conduct. These standards are not formed in a vacuum. They instead reflect the careful thought of our Safety Advisory Board, which counts among its members some of the world's leading experts in online safety and user behavior.

Although we cannot prevent physical abuse from occurring—whether in a nursing home or schoolyard—Snapchat is fiercely committed to terminating the accounts of Snapchatters who we believe have engaged in abusive behavior. We also cooperate with U.S. law enforcement when we receive appropriate legal process. And, of course, we welcome ideas about how we can continue to improve our policies and procedures as our company and products continue to grow.

With this in mind, we would like to provide the following answers to the questions posed in your June 9th letter:

1. With respect to the apparent increase in the use of social media and electronic devices to record elderly residents in compromising situations, what steps has Snapchat taken, or intends to take, to prevent the abuse of its platform to exploit the elderly? Please explain in detail.

Snapchat's Community Guidelines have always prohibited this type of activity. Under the heading "What not to Snap" the Community Guidelines read:

Invasions of privacy

- Do not take Snaps of people without their knowledge and consent.
- Take extra care not to violate people's privacy in private spaces, like someone's home, a bathroom, dressing room, or locker room.

When we receive a credible report that this policy has been violated, we permanently terminate the offending user's account.

2. Please advise on any actions Snapchat takes when its application is used for abusive or criminal acts.

Snapchat employs a dedicated Trust and Safety team that investigates abuse reports and enforces our Community Guidelines and Terms of Service. We have a zero-tolerance policy for severe offenses and it is not uncommon for a Snapchat account to be terminated on the first credible report of abusive behavior.

Snapchat is committed to providing appropriate assistance to law-enforcement investigations. To this end, we provide a guide for law enforcement that details how to request the preservation and production of user data, in accordance with governing laws. We also maintain a round-the-clock hotline to facilitate emergency requests.

Snapchat also works closely with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to investigate and report incidents of suspected child sexual abuse and solicitation. As a member of the Technology Coalition, Snapchat contributes to the development of technology to combat abuse, including the implementation of PhotoDNA technology to prevent the spread of known child sexual exploitation images.

3. Does Snapchat have a plan in place to detect and combat the apparent growing number of instances of elder abuse? If so, what is the plan? If not, why not?

We continually strive to improve all aspects of our service, including the ability to detect and report abuse. We are currently developing a more streamlined in-app reporting system, which will make it faster and easier for Snapchatters to document and report incidents of abuse. However, these efforts are by no means specific to elder abuse or patient medical privacy, which thankfully remain extraordinarily rare and isolated incidents on Snapchat.

We appreciate your leadership on these important issues and are grateful for the opportunity to engage with you. If you have any further questions or feedback, I can be reached at chris@snapchat.com.

Sincerely,

Chris Handman
General Counsel

facebook

June 23, 2016

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley, Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley:

Thank you for your letters of June 8 and 9 to Mark Zuckerberg and Kevin Systrom. We join you in your outrage over elder abuse. There is no place for it on Facebook or Instagram. Our mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected and we strive to offer platforms that are authentic and a safe place for inspiration and expression.

Facebook and Instagram's content policies are designed to keep our users safe, and we develop tools and dedicate resources specifically to detect and respond to violations of these policies. Our policies prohibit the crude photos mentioned in your letter. We also prohibit bullying or harassment, including content that targets private individuals with the intention of degrading or shaming them, and we work hard to quickly review and take down this type of content when it occurs. We also remove content that threatens or promotes sexual violence or exploitation. To protect victims and survivors, we remove photographs or videos depicting incidents of sexual violence and we restrict the display of nudity. For example, we remove photographs of people displaying genitals, fully exposed buttocks, and images of female breasts. (Of course there are exceptions, such as with posts about breast feeding.) We also prohibit the use of Facebook and Instagram to facilitate or organize criminal activity, including acts that causes physical harm to people, and our policies male clear that we prohibit people celebrating crimes they have committed. For more information about Facebook's Community Standards and Instagram's Community Guidelines is available at https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards and https://help.instagram.com/477434105621119, respectively.

Often we are informed about posts that violate our policies through our robust reporting tools. Facebook, a community of over 1.65 billion people, and Instagram, a community of approximately 500 million people, rely on people to report violations of our terms to us. We have dedicated teams working around the world 24/7 to review reports to help make sure Facebook and Instagram remain safe. We make it easy to report content on both Facebook and Instagram because user reporting is a critical part of our content policy

enforcement program. We want to hear about abusive content and when we do, we investigate and respond quickly. Anyone can report content while they are viewing it by simply clicking the down arrow icon on Facebook or the three dots icon on Instagram, which is located in the top right-hand corner the content. You also can block anyone you don't want interact with from that same pull-down menu or from that person's page on Facebook or Instagram.

In addition to the safety policies and tools we offer on our platform, Facebook works with the law enforcement community and online safety NGOs to promote safety on and offline. This includes providing information to law enforcement officials that will help them respond to emergencies and responding to official legal requests for account records. This also includes working with NGOs to provide safety trainings and guides for our entire community, as well as specific audiences such as senior citizens. An example of a safety training is available at http://access.tarrantcounty.com/en/county-judge/programs-and-initiatives/senior-synergy/workshops.html and an example of a specific guide is the "Baby Boomers Guide to Facebook" available at https://fbnewsroomus.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/baby-boomers-guide.pdf. For more information about how Facebook interacts with law enforcement and responds to legal requests please review our Safety Center at https://www.facebook.com/safety/groups/law/ and our Global Government Request Report at https://www.facebook.com/about/government_requests.

We are dedicated to the safety of our community and know that Facebook can serve as an important platform for raising awareness and encouraging community action around important social issues such as elder abuse. For example, Facebook hosts the National Center on Elder Abuse's Page, https://www.facebook.com/NationalCenteronElderAbuse/, which has over 4,500 Likes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any further questions about Facebook or Instagram.

Sincerely,

Monika Bickert
Head of Product Policy
Facebook, Inc.

cc: The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Minority Member