

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 17, 2018

Jeff Bezos  
Chief Executive Officer  
Amazon.com, Inc.  
410 Terry Ave N.  
Seattle, WA 98109

Larry Page  
Chief Executive Officer  
Alphabet Inc.  
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway  
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Bezos and Mr. Page:

We write concerning your companies' recent decision to ban the practice of "domain fronting" on your platforms. We are deeply concerned that this decision will have a detrimental effect on human rights and internet freedom around the world.

As you know, domain fronting is a technique that allows dissidents and others to communicate more securely in countries where the internet may be censored and surveilled. Domain fronting allows anti-censorship tools to use major internet providers, such as Amazon and Google, as proxies to evade network blocks. Anti-censorship tools supported and funded by the U.S. government have for several years used domain fronting to route traffic through your servers. This technique makes these critical tools—which are used by millions of people to browse the web anonymously, circumvent government censorship, and communicate securely—available to users in countries where repressive governments seek to block them.

Both your companies have benefited enormously from the free and open internet protected by the United States and its allies. Indeed, your previous role in facilitating these internet freedom tools by permitting domain fronting was neither a mistake nor a secret. Senior Google officials have publicly referenced traffic obfuscation with admiration and support. Moreover Google even contributed financial resources to advance research in the field. This technology was a central part of an internet freedom agenda that your companies (and the technology industry more broadly) rightly promoted as a part of its public image.

Regrettably, your recent decision to ban the practice of domain fronting will prevent millions of people in some of the most repressive environments including China, Iran, Russia and Egypt from accessing a free and open internet. Dissidents, pro-democracy activists, and protesters living under authoritarian regimes need access to secure communications enabled by domain fronting techniques to stay safe and organize.

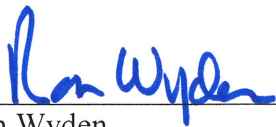
Governments with anti-democratic agendas may put significant pressures on technology companies to help enable their censorship and surveillance of the internet. American technology companies, which have flourished in our free and open society, must join in the effort to resist such pressure. While this may seem like a reasonable business decision in the short term, it will ultimately do far more harm to your companies and the network of which you have been a core part.

Accordingly, we respectfully request please provide written responses to the following questions related to your decision to end domain fronting and other alternatives you may have considered:

1. What steps did your companies take, prior to prohibiting domain fronting, to determine whether it was possible to prohibit its use by malicious actors, while still permitting positive uses, including U.S. government-supported internet freedom tools?
2. After deciding to take action to limit the use of domain fronting, what efforts, if any, did your companies take to minimize the disruption to U.S. government-supported internet freedom tools and platforms relied on by human rights activists, journalists, members of faith communities and civil society groups? What steps have your companies taken, or do you plan to take, to mitigate the effect that your decision to end domain fronting has had on internet anti-censorship tools and platforms?

We thank you for your cooperation and look forward to your timely response. More broadly, we respectfully urge you to reconsider your decision to prohibit domain fronting given the harm it will do to global internet freedom and the risk it will impose upon human rights activists, journalists, and others who rely on internet freedom tools.

Sincerely,



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



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Marco Rubio  
United States Senator