



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on March 2, 2023

GOP Advances Anti-TikTok Bill – Democrats Are Livid

The House GOP has advanced legislation to empower the president to ban TikTok, the controversial but popular video-based social media platform owned by Chinese company ByteDance.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee on Wednesday [voted 24-16](#) to advance the legislation. The vote was along party lines and came after a contentious meeting of the panel on Tuesday, during which the committee's Democrats accused their Republican counterparts of trying to rush the proposal through.

The bill, [H.R. 1153](#), introduced by Committee Chair Michael McCaul (R-Texas), is titled the Deterring America's Technology Adversaries Act (DATA Act). It now proceeds to the House floor, where it needs a majority vote in the chamber.



Leonel Sohns/Wikimedia Commons

Democrats were frustrated that there were no hearings on the bill before the vote.

Per *The Hill*:

“We should not be making judgements based upon fear, based upon speculation. Especially when we have a process in place with the [Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States] to determine what the facts are,” ranking member Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.) said, referring to the CFIUS review Biden ordered of TikTok in June 2021.

Meeks told further told *The Hill*, “This is far too serious for us to make a decision by fear and to be wrong,” and said the bill would “undercut core American values of free speech and free enterprise” while jeopardizing American jobs and damaging the country's relations with other countries.

McCaul characterized TikTok as a “modern day Trojan Horse” by which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is able to “surveil and exploit” the personal data of Americans. He explained that his plan would allow the administration not only to sanction TikTok, but to take similar action against other applications that “threaten” America's national security.

The DATA Act would revise the current Berman Amendments, which restrict the president's ability to regulate informational materials — a way of ensuring there is an exchange of ideas across countries. McCaul's bill would amend this so that the president can act with greater latitude in cases involving “sensitive personal data.”

This change would make it possible for the White House to ban applications like TikTok, which has been accused of giving Americans' personal data to China.



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TikTok has pushed back against these accusations:

“A U.S. ban on TikTok is a ban on the export of American culture and values to the billion-plus people who use our service worldwide. We’re disappointed to see this rushed piece of legislation move forward, despite its considerable negative impact on the free speech rights of millions of Americans who use and love TikTok,” said TikTok spokesperson Brooke Oberwetter in a Wednesday statement.

The Hill also noted Democrats’ fierce response to the bill’s advancement out of committee:

Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.) said what is “most disappointing” about Tuesday’s markup is there is “broad universal support” to do what the bill aims to do, but that the bill presented to the committee for a vote is “not well written” and lacks definitions on key portions of the text.

Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove (D-Calif.) said the “hastily drafted” bill could “decimate” U.S. companies and has concerning implications for Americans’ right to freedom of expression.

“To me this bill is clear evidence of an attempt to use the hot button issue to jump into the spotlight with no regard for the actual policy impacts,” she said.

Another opponent of the legislation is the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which argues the DATA Act would violate the First Amendment.

TikTok has not been averse to openly showing its left-leaning stripes. Last year, the social-media platform discreetly [reversed a ban](#) it had placed on the activities of a pro-abortion group known for using TikTok to coordinate protests outside the homes of conservative Supreme Court justices.

TikTok has deep ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The platform’s parent company, ByteDance, is known for recruiting former Communist Party officials and giving them preference in hiring. That includes those with ties to the Chinese military.

Moreover, as *The National Pulse* notes, the founder of ByteDance vowed to use the company to “promote socialist core values.” In fact, the CCP now has an official stake in the firm.

President Donald Trump tried to take on TikTok, signing an executive order in August of 2020 that banned any U.S. transactions with ByteDance. The ban on the app was blocked by a federal judge, however, and then revoked by Joe Biden in June 2021.

Nevertheless, Biden did sign into law a ban of TikTok on government devices that same month.

Even some Democrats are open to taking action against TikTok. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) has called on Apple and Google to take the platform off of their respective app stores.

And Senate Intelligence Committee Chair Mark Warner (D-Va.) has said he plans to introduce legislation to create a process for the risk assessment of foreign-based tech platforms.



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