

Warner & Klobuchar Call on Google & Twitter to Comply with the Honest Ads Act

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WASHINGTON— U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) today called on Twitter and Alphabet, Inc., the parent company of Google, to implement stronger transparency and accountability standards for online political advertisements. Specifically, the Senators called on the companies to voluntarily implement the provisions in the [Honest Ads Act](#), bipartisan legislation introduced by Sens. Klobuchar, Warner and John McCain (R-AZ) that would require online political advertisements to abide by the same disclosure rules as television and radio ads.

Russia attempted to influence the 2016 presidential election by buying and placing political ads on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Google. However, Americans had no way of knowing who was behind the ads, because, unlike radio and television ads, the Federal Election Commission (FEC) has exempted large swathes of online ads from general requirements to include disclaimers about who is responsible for the content, and platforms are not required to make public information about political ad purchases as cable, satellite, and broadcast providers must.

“This lack of transparency has dangerous implications for our democracy. As we saw in the 2016 presidential election, foreign actors can seek to influence the electorate without voters’ knowledge through online political advertising,” **wrote Sens. Warner and Klobuchar in a pair of letters today to Alphabet CEO Larry Page and Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey.**

On Friday, April 6, Facebook announced that it would endorse and implement the disclosure requirements outlined in the Honest Ads Act. In today’s letters, Sens. Warner and Klobuchar asked Google and Twitter to do the same.

“The Honest Ads Act would apply analogous rules to online political advertisements that currently exist in traditional media, bringing long-overdue transparency to the opaque market of online political advertising. It would extend existing disclaimer obligations that print, broadcast, and cable ads

must already meet to analogous political ads disseminated on online platforms... And it would require digital platforms to maintain a public record of political ads purchased by an advertiser who spends more than \$500 in any 12 month period,” **wrote the Senators**. “Lastly, it requires that all advertising platforms – whether broadcast, radio or digital – make reasonable efforts to ensure that the prohibition on foreign nationals attempting to influence our elections through donations, expenditures or other things of value is not violated. These measures not only increase transparency in political advertising, but also promote accountability – both of platforms and of political advertisers.”

To read the Senators’ letter to Alphabet CEO Larry Page, click [here](#). To read their letter to Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, click [here](#).

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