

August 5, 2021

Mr. Doug Parker
Chairman and CEO
American Airlines
1 Skyview Drive
Fort Worth, Texas 76155

Dear Mr. Parker:

I write to express concerns over American Airlines new “innovative partnership” with TikTok, which includes offering free, in-flight access to the Chinese-owned video-sharing app that is notorious for its collection of children’s personal information, including phone numbers, locations, and even biometric data.

As you know, in 2019, the U.S. Government launched a national security review of TikTok due to data privacy and data security concerns -- a review which remains active to this day. In 2015, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) National Security Law codified a requirement that companies based in the PRC, including ByteDance, the owner of TikTok, provide “necessary support and assistance” to the PRC’s security and intelligence agencies. In 2017, the PRC National Intelligence Law further elaborated on these companies’ legal obligations to comply with all intelligence-gathering operations conducted by the PRC authorities. In other words, any data acquired by TikTok on American citizens is readily available to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its intelligence apparatus.

The nature of the threat is well documented. In addition to America’s ongoing national security review, the mishandling of children’s data is the subject of a legal filing in the United Kingdom and European Union, which accuses TikTok of “sinister” actions. Specifically, the multi-billion dollar legal challenge claims TikTok is nothing more than “a data collection service that is thinly veiled as a social network” that “deliberately and successfully deceived parents.” In June 2020, the Government of India deemed the security risks associated with TikTok to be severe enough to warrant an outright ban on downloading TikTok among other apps created by PRC companies.

Moreover, TikTok continues to actively censor views that are not in line with the PRC Government and CCP directives. Indeed, TikTok’s loyalty to Beijing is not in question. In 2018, ByteDance CEO and founder Zhang Yiming wrote that TikTok “took the wrong path, and content appeared that was incommensurate with socialist core values.”

By partnering with TikTok, American Airlines is now lending its brand credibility to a company that endangers national security and the data security of tens of millions of Americans, many of them minors. I urge you to suspend American Airlines’ “innovative partnership” with

TikTok while the U.S. Government completes its investigation into the national security risks posed by the Chinese-owned app.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator