

under age 13 because such research would reveal that children used its platforms. They didn't want to know what they knew. They didn't want the documentation to reinforce and prove that they were in violation of the law.

So if it looks like a duckling, swims like a duckling, quacks like a duckling, it is probably a duckling. And that is what these companies are doing. We know. They know. Everybody knows what they are doing.

So the States' complaint makes this clear: Meta knew that Facebook and Instagram were filled with ducklings but deliberately stuck their head in the sand. And, by the way, for people watching, Facebook just changed their name to Meta, but it is still the same. It is still Facebook. It is still Instagram. And they are both owned by Meta.

So thanks to COPPA, Meta is being held accountable for this brazen conduct, for collecting vast quantities of data for its targeted advertising machine without even trying to obtain parental consent at all.

Despite the valiant efforts of the Federal Trade Commission and State regulators, websites and online services have found ways to skirt these privacy protections to amass troves of data on young people and feed their data-fueled business model.

And, most notably, teenagers are unprotected by COPPA. Similarly, the law does not contain strict protections against excessive data collection or targeted advertising by Big Tech.

When I first pushed for COPPA in 1998, I summarized my plan in three words: disclosure, knowledge, and no—disclosure of privacy policies, knowledge of the information collected on our children being reused for other purposes, and the right to say no to the reuse or sale of that information.

Today, the same formula works, except the no. It is now more like a “no, no, no; stop it; end this.”

We have a mental health teenage and child crisis in our country, and the Surgeon General of the United States has pointed the finger at social media: No. Stop it. End it.

And the companies must still disclose their privacy practices to users and still must ensure their parents can access the information collected on their kids and prohibit future use of that information. But we need to adapt. We need to adopt stronger and more aggressive protections to disrupt Big Tech's business model, to provide Big Tech with financial incentives to build healthy platforms for our young people and not these dangerous cesspools that have been created.

And that is why, for over a decade, I have been introducing legislation to crack open Big Tech's business model by prohibiting targeted advertising for kids and teens and to prohibit Big Tech from collecting data on young people beyond what is necessary to provide the service. These provisions—along with raising the COPPA age to cover

teens up to age 17 and preventing online platforms like Meta from pretending their users aren't children or teens—target the perverse incentives with Big Tech's business model. They fix the rot under the floorboards of this whole system, rather than just applying a new layer of paint.

This is the “no, no, no” that this Senate, this country must say to Big Tech, and it is the foundation of my and Senator CASSIDY's COPPA 2.0 legislation, which has now passed through the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee. The committee unanimously, last year, No. 1, said no targeted advertising toward teenagers and children; No. 2, no unnecessary data collection from children and teenagers in our country; No. 3, no deliberately ignoring young users and pretending you don't know that they are young because your algorithms tell you they are young. You know it. You know it, just because of all of the other sites these young people go to. You know who they are.

By addressing the business model, COPPA 2.0 also preserves the real benefits of social media. It allows young people to open accounts, converse with friends and family, find new communities, learn, grow, develop, and take part in rich online spaces.

I have heard from countless young people that these spaces are essential for their own development and growth. So, as policymakers at every level, but especially in this body, we consider different approaches to regulating social media and addressing the youth mental health crisis. We must remember the ultimate source of the whole problem is the data which they collect. We cannot allow them. We cannot permit them to continue to collect that data and then use it to go back and target kids with it.

And any effort to combat this crisis has to include effective reforms to minimize this data collection, enhance privacy protection for young people online, and ban targeted advertising for kids and teens. That is what COPPA 2.0 does. I am deeply proud to lead this legislation with my good friend from Louisiana, Senator CASSIDY, a physician who knows that there is a mental health crisis in our country. And I am thankful for the thoughtful work of Chair CANTWELL and Ranking Member CRUZ on this bill, and I am delighted to say that both have agreed to cosponsor COPPA 2.0.

COPPA 2.0 is bipartisan. It is a commonsense effort to address Big Tech's insatiable appetite for data and their incentive to addict our kids and teens to their platforms by returning to the lessons from the 1990s, which we knew was going to be a problem right from the beginning. We can put an end to Big Tech's impunity. We can turn social media platforms into healthy spaces for our young people. We can finally look our kids in the eye and say: We are making changes for them, to protect them, to deal with this mental health teen and children's crisis in our country.

The surgeon general has pointed the finger at this as a major source of the problem. We have to do something about it. So I urge my colleagues, on a bipartisan basis—and I know it is bipartisan at this time—that we move, and we move rapidly. We have to give relief to parents and families all across our country.

We just can't allow Big Tech CEOs to determine the morality of our country, the values of our country. The technologies should animate our values, not the values of tech CEOs. They should have the values of the American people that are built into it.

So that is my hope. I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and I will just add, parenthetically, that the other thing I was able to do in 1996 was to pass in that bill, the legislation which pays for kids, the poorest kids in America, to be online at their desks in schools. Otherwise, rich kids would have had it, and poor kids would not. So far, that program is a \$75 billion program—\$75 billion—the largest single educational technology program in the history of our country to make sure that poor kids have it on their desk. And for the first time in American history, a new technology was introduced at the same pace for poor kids as the rich kids. But we still have much more work to do to make sure that they can afford it at all, that they can have access to it, because our country is changing, and the technology is helping to change it, and we must keep up with the policies that we know are going to be necessary—especially to protect young people in our country. They are only 20 percent of our population, but they are 100 percent of our future, and we, in the Senate, must act this year to protect them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Iowa.

OVERSIGHT INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I want to take the time of my colleagues to set the record straight, yet again, about an FBI investigative report that has been generated that goes by the number 1023, and I do this because the breathless media misreporting requires that I come to the floor to give a historical reorientation of the facts and the evidence.

As I have said all along on the Senate floor, I and Chairman COMER of the House, made the 1023 document public for this single purpose; that purpose is to force the FBI to do what the taxpayers pay the FBI to do, and that is investigate, in this case, the information contained in that document that goes by the number of 1023.

It is all pretty simple. I didn't promote or vouch for the allegations in 1023 as the truth, like some confused Democrats and the partisan media have falsely said. I pushed the FBI to do their job because that is my responsibility to the taxpayers and the people of Iowa.

Now some confused Democrats and partisan media have returned to their favorite line, falsely saying that our effort to get the FBI to do their job is somehow peddling Russian disinformation. It is kind of like a nervous tic to all of them.

For years, they falsely said the same thing about my and Senator JOHNSON's Biden family investigation, even though our investigation was based on Obama and Biden administration records and, really, on authentic bank records.

Some Democrats and the partisan media apparently don't care about observing and reading the facts. Well, this Senator does care about that. So let's discuss the facts of the matter that they either missed or, more likely, are choosing to ignore because it doesn't fit their narrative.

The whistleblowers within the Justice Department who came to me said the FBI had this document, the 1023, in their possession, now 3 years ago, June of 2020—3.5 years ago, in fact, because that document is dated June 30, 2020. Those whistleblowers that came to me were right.

Whistleblowers said that the FBI considered its confidential human source to be credible. That confidential human source—which I will simply describe today as the FBI's source—formed the basis of the 1023.

If you are following television, we now know the name of that FBI source. But until he was arrested, I did not know his name.

The FBI said the same to Congress and used the credibility of that source, the credibility assessment of that individual, to withhold the 1023 from Congress when we first asked for it. Even Ranking Member RASKIN of the House Committee confirmed that the FBI told Congress that the FBI source was credible.

The FBI found their source so credible that the FBI gave their source the authority even to engage in illegal activity for the FBI's criminal investigation. And, yes, I want to make clear: The FBI said that he could do illegal things in his work for the FBI. The FBI told him that he may even have to testify in court based on the information he provided.

In fact, the FBI said that this source was so credible that the public release of the unclassified 1023 could put his life at risk, another excuse that they used.

Now let me be clear: The FBI consistently and publicly vouched for their source. Then the other week, the Biden Justice made this source's name public for the world to see. So if you watch television, you get his name off of television. Apparently, the FBI's excuse to withhold the document from Congress, as you can see, was pure smoke. Remember, the FBI said releasing the 1023 could put their confidential human source's life in danger.

The FBI's conduct is, of course, obviously absurd and a disservice to the

American people—that means a disservice to the American people when the FBI doesn't do its job of following up on investigative reports, as they didn't in this case for 3 years.

So you can see those same whistleblowers were right about the FBI believing that their source was credible. Whistleblower said the FBI's source served as a source for many years, dating to the Obama administration. According to the Justice Department indictment, the FBI's source worked for the Federal Government and was paid by the Federal Government since 2010. So, again, those whistleblowers at the Justice Department were right.

Whistleblowers said the FBI failed to investigate the allegations in the document. So let me refresh this history by giving the timeline: According to the Justice Department indictment, the FBI finally interviewed the FBI source on September 27 last year. We made the 1023 public just a few months prior on July 20, 2023.

Clearly, the FBI finally acted because of our release of the document. In other words, we embarrassed them. And by that time, as I have said, by my timeline, the document was over 3 years old—3 years they didn't do their job that the FBI ought to have been following up on.

So the 1023 sat with the FBI collecting dust until we in Congress acted. My releasing the 1023 got the FBI to do its job that they should have been doing 3 years before. So I think it is legitimate in this political climate we are in this year, a presidential year, to ask the question: Would Special Counsel Jack Smith have waited years to act if the 1023 was about former President Trump?

Those whistleblowers were right about the FBI's failure to investigate. I started my oversight relating to the FBI's failure to investigate the 1023 on October 13, 2022. So I didn't have the document in my possession. I knew about it from the whistleblowers, but what information I got from the whistleblowers was without actually reading the document.

I sent a letter to Attorney General Garland, Director Wray, and U.S. Attorney Weiss to ask this very simple question:

What have the FBI and the Justice Department, to include U.S. Attorney Weiss, done to investigate?

I also asked for an array of documents, including travel documents that the Justice Department has used to indict the source, and I also asked, before I had read the document, for the same records. Again, this would have been after we released the document, so I correct myself. I asked for the same records again on October 24, 2023.

I said this on May 3, a year earlier:

What we don't know is what, if anything, the FBI has done to verify these claims or investigate further.

I asked on May 5, 2023, about the 1023:

I wish I could say I knew it was true or untrue.

On May 9, 2023, I said:

My focus right now is on the FBI and the Department of Justice. What have they done with this [1023] document?

On June 1, 2023, I said:

We're responsible for making sure the FBI does its job, and that's what we want to know.

I came to this floor of the Senate on June 12, 2023, to say to my colleagues this:

Here, with this 1023 document I've been referring to throughout my remarks, the Biden Justice Department and FBI must explain to Congress and the American people what, if anything, they have done with this information. And they need to show their work. We are not accepting their word anymore. We are seeking documentary proof of what they did to investigate the matter or their failure to do so.

Then, after COMER and I publicly released the document, I said this on July 25, 2023:

I want to make clear what my oversight focus is and will be: holding the Biden Justice Department and FBI accountable to explain to the American people what they did to investigate and what they found.

What did the Justice Department and FBI do to investigate the information contained in the 1023? Did the Justice Department and [the] FBI follow normal investigative process and procedure or try to sweep it all under the rug because of political bias? More precisely, did the FBI and DOJ seek to obtain the evidence referenced in the document?

Did [the Department of Justice] and FBI seek to interview individuals relating to the 1023? If not, why not? If so, one way or the other, what did they find?

And that is the end of the quote from what I said here on the floor of the Senate last year on this very subject.

Let me say that one line again so everyone hears me. "One way or the other, what did they" meaning the FBI, "find?"

All of these partisan media outlets, if they had a shred of intellectual honesty and decency, would report these facts and hold the FBI accountable for their failures. And, of course, one congressional request after another went unanswered by the Justice Department and the FBI.

So, considering that deafening silence and the FBI's assertions that the source was credible, we made the 1023 public to force the FBI to do what they are paid to do—to do their job. They were supposed to be investigating this matter 3 years ago and doing it not for CHUCK GRASSLEY but for the American people.

If Congress didn't ask for transparency and accountability—in other words, we in the Congress doing our oversight work—we would break faith with the American people, just like the FBI that didn't do its job and broke faith with the American people.

And do you know what else? The Biden administration hasn't answered my and Senator JOHNSON's oversight requests. Let's not forget, there is a larger investigative picture here other than just 1023. Senator JOHNSON and I released two reports in 2020 as part of our Biden family investigation. We

gave a series of floor speeches introducing bank records connecting the Biden family to communist China financial interests. Then, on October 26, 2022, we sent hundreds of pages of those bank records to U.S. Attorney Weiss.

So then this question is appropriate: To my Democratic colleagues and, more importantly, the partisan media that is not doing their job, are those authentic bank records that Johnson and I made public—is that Russian disinformation?

Now, Chairmen COMER, JORDAN, and SMITH have built and advanced upon the foundation created by Senator JOHNSON and this Senator.

So here is the question: Where is the Biden Justice Department regarding those bank records and potential money laundering?

Where is the Biden Justice Department regarding Biden family members registering under the Foreign Agents Registration Act?

Another question: The Biden Justice Department appears concerned about their FBI source's contact with foreign nationals; so where is that same concern regarding the Biden family's foreign connections? Are the Justice Department and FBI sitting on it just like they did with the 1023 for at least 3 years?

Here is another question to pose to the media and my colleagues: If we didn't make the 1023 public, would the FBI have interviewed the FBI source or would he remain on the taxpayers' payroll for another 10 years, continuing to misinform the FBI? And by misinforming, I presume that is the reason why he is sitting in jail right now in Los Angeles, awaiting trial or waiting on whatever they have to do to follow up on the arrest.

What will happen to the defendants if this source's information was used for a conviction or a plea deal?

This is really quite the mess for the Justice Department and the FBI, and it is one of their own making.

My oversight investigations are done without regard to power, party, or privilege, and I back that statement up with asking you to remember, I am the Senator who did a transcribed interview with Donald Trump, Jr., when Donald Trump was President of the United States. That is when I was chairman of the Judiciary Committee. I also ordered my staff to interview other Republicans during my Crossfire Hurricane investigation, and you know what? If I had the gavel today, I would bring more Bidens to Congress to testify because the American people really deserve the kind of nonpartisan oversight that I have been conducting for years.

And remember this—and it is pretty simple—If the FBI came clean years ago about this document 1023, we wouldn't have had to release that very document. I wouldn't have had to rely on whistleblowers to make this public. So this guy still could be working for the FBI for another 10 years.

Instead, these people played games, withheld the document from Congress, and provided false and misleading information to Congress and the American people, not wanting to come clean on what they did with 1023.

We all know that transparency in government brings accountability. Now, folks are being held accountable because of my congressional oversight.

My oversight will continue.

The FBI has a lot of explaining to do for their continued shortcomings and actions in this case.

When will the media ask the FBI to explain?

I just explained it for the American people. I would like to see the media cover this instead of talking about Russian disinformation when this issue is discussed in print media and on television.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that that I be permitted to speak for up to 40 minutes and Senator PETERS be permitted to speak up to 3 minutes prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GENDER DYSPHORIA

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with me today is one of my colleagues from my Senate office, Mr. Matt Turner.

Mr. President, not long ago, on February 23, in fact, an article appeared in one of my State's local newspapers. If it had appeared on the opinion page where it belonged, I wouldn't be saying a word because everybody in America has the right to their opinion. Instead, it appeared in the news section as a purportedly objective news article.

In this article some reporter said, "The state" referring to the State of Louisiana, "The state has already banned transgender young people from receiving gender-affirming medical care."

That is not true, and I want to spend a few minutes responding to this inaccurate statement in the news as opposed to the opinion section of one of my newspapers.

It is very hard to be a parent today, and it is even harder to be a kid. Between social media and cell phones, this generation is growing up in a way that we could not have imagined a few decades ago. Nowhere is this clearer than the issue of gender confusion among our children.

Children today are facing an onslaught of identity-obsessed activism. Well before a child learns the difference between adjectives and verbs, activists in many government schools are teaching their pre-K students lessons on transgender pronouns—pronouns like "ze" and "zir." Public libraries are hosting "drag queen story time" for "children of all ages."

The American Federation of Teachers—one of our largest, if not the largest, national teachers unions—actually

runs a website with a lesson on how teachers can help children hide their transgender status from their parents. I kid you not. TikTok essentially functions as a "how to transition" guide book.

The issue of gender has morphed from a topic that only involved the personal decisions of private adults into a movement—a movement that seeks to inject questions about gender and sexuality into every aspect of a child's life with or without parental approval. In fact, parents who disagree with the notion that adults should be immersing young children in discussions about gender and sexuality fear being smeared as bigots. In more horrifying examples, parents risk losing custody of their children for refusing to adopt a particular—usually a pro-transgender—ideology.

It is not new for activists to target kids with their political rhetoric—unfortunately, we see it every day in America—but the gender and sexuality agenda goes far beyond the usual policy disputes that we see on a regular basis here in Washington. We are talking about giving children irreversible medical treatments before they can even understand the consequences of those medical procedures. I want to be very clear here. Eighty-five percent of the children who express some confusion about their gender—85 percent of the kids who say they are confused about their gender will outgrow it by the time they finish as adolescents. Now, that is just a fact. We have no idea, unfortunately, which 8-year-olds are going to outgrow their gender confusion, but we know it will be most of them—85 percent. Yet some activists in this country, particularly at Planned Parenthood, want to put kids under the knife or pump them full of hormones before these minors have a chance to grasp the consequences, and it is happening throughout our country.

Like with a frog in a pot, gender activists have gradually turned up the heat, and we have all seen it. Now the United States is boiling over with some of the most radical pediatric gender policies on Earth—on Earth. To understand just how extreme these policies are, I need to discuss a few of these so-called treatments and how they are implemented today.

Today, many activists believe that the only way to respond to a child with gender confusion is by affirming whatever the child says about his or her gender, agree with the kids in all cases. Activists warn parents—we hear it all the time—not to question their child's gender proclamation. If a first grade boy tells his parents on a Tuesday that he is a girl, these activists say parents are just supposed to agree with the child until the child changes his mind on a Thursday.

Now, if you have ever raised a child, first, thank you, but if you have ever raised a child, there was probably a point during which your child told you that he or she was—I don't know—a