



June 23, 2016

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter of June 9, 2016 regarding what are positively heartbreaking incidents of elder abuse in nursing homes. We appreciate the opportunity to talk about Snapchat and the efforts we are taking to ensure a safe and respectful experience for everyone on our platform. At the outset, we want to assure you that a Snap taken of a person without their consent—similar to those described in your letter—would unmistakably violate our Community Guidelines and Terms of Service. We do not tolerate cruelty in our community.

Snapchat is one of the world's most popular apps to keep in touch with friends and creatively tell the stories of our daily lives. It's used in countless languages, by people of all backgrounds, and increasingly by world leaders and governments to engage with their constituents.

With over 100 million daily users sending 1 billion images and videos every day, the vast majority of activity on Snapchat is positive. While we always want Snapchatters to feel free to express themselves, we recognize that some content can be so vile that it will actually inhibit free expression and the robust creativity Snapchat encourages. That is why we have developed Community Guidelines and Terms of Service that categorically prohibit invasions of privacy, harassment, the exploitation of minors, and other unlawful conduct. These standards are not formed in a vacuum. They instead reflect the careful thought of our Safety Advisory Board, which counts among its members some of the world's leading experts in online safety and user behavior.

Although we cannot prevent physical abuse from occurring—whether in a nursing home or schoolyard—Snapchat is fiercely committed to terminating the accounts of Snapchatters who we believe have engaged in abusive behavior. We also cooperate with U.S. law enforcement when we receive appropriate legal process. And, of course, we welcome ideas about how we can continue to improve our policies and procedures as our company and products continue to grow.

With this in mind, we would like to provide the following answers to the questions posed in your June 9th letter:

1. With respect to the apparent increase in the use of social media and electronic devices to record elderly residents in compromising situations, what steps has Snapchat taken, or intends to take, to prevent the abuse of its platform to exploit the elderly? Please explain in detail.

Snapchat's Community Guidelines have always prohibited this type of activity. Under the heading "What not to Snap" the Community Guidelines read:



Invasions of privacy

- Do not take Snaps of people without their knowledge and consent.
- Take extra care not to violate people's privacy in private spaces, like someone's home, a bathroom, dressing room, or locker room.

When we receive a credible report that this policy has been violated, we permanently terminate the offending user's account.

2. Please advise on any actions Snapchat takes when its application is used for abusive or criminal acts.

Snapchat employs a dedicated Trust and Safety team that investigates abuse reports and enforces our Community Guidelines and Terms of Service. We have a zero-tolerance policy for severe offenses and it is not uncommon for a Snapchat account to be terminated on the first credible report of abusive behavior.

Snapchat is committed to providing appropriate assistance to law-enforcement investigations. To this end, we provide a guide for law enforcement that details how to request the preservation and production of user data, in accordance with governing laws. We also maintain a round-the-clock hotline to facilitate emergency requests.

Snapchat also works closely with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to investigate and report incidents of suspected child sexual abuse and solicitation. As a member of the Technology Coalition, Snapchat contributes to the development of technology to combat abuse, including the implementation of PhotoDNA technology to prevent the spread of known child sexual exploitation images.

3. Does Snapchat have a plan in place to detect and combat the apparent growing number of instances of elder abuse? If so, what is the plan? If not, why not?

We continually strive to improve all aspects of our service, including the ability to detect and report abuse. We are currently developing a more streamlined in-app reporting system, which will make it faster and easier for Snapchatters to document and report incidents of abuse. However, these efforts are by no means specific to elder abuse or patient medical privacy, which thankfully remain extraordinarily rare and isolated incidents on Snapchat.

We appreciate your leadership on these important issues and are grateful for the opportunity to engage with you. If you have any further questions or feedback, I can be reached at

Email Address .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CH' followed by a stylized flourish.

Chris Handman
General Counsel