



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 24, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I write to urge you to consider the direct labor implications of a sale or divestiture of TikTok, as well as impacts on those workers who might not be directly employed (contracted cleaners, vendors, etc.) but nonetheless harmed by the approval of a sale that does not recognize their presence. Approximately 8,000 people work for TikTok in the United States, concentrated in California and New York. Their employment and the livelihoods of their families hang in the balance. I write today to call attention to their contributions and to urge you to consider the unintended consequences on workers and allay those concerns as you consider a qualified divestiture.

Thus far, the labor implications of a TikTok sale or divestiture have not been part of the broader TikTok conversation, to the detriment of thousands of Americans. These dedicated workers have been crucial to the overall success of the platform, and some have also been essential to advancing our understanding of the national security¹ and data privacy concerns² raised by TikTok's Chinese ownership³. In turn, we must acknowledge the impact on TikTok workers, and our local economies, as we determine a path forward. I urge you to engage in a consultative process that balances very serious national security concerns with the labor, economic, and other myriad issues at stake.

¹ *TikTok Struggles to Protect US Data from its Chinese Parent*. January 30, 2024. Wall Street Journal. https://www.wsj.com/tech/tiktok-pledged-to-protect-u-s-data-1-5-billion-later-its-still-struggling-cbcef203?mod=Searchresults_pos9&page=1

² *TikTok Tracked Users Who Watched Gay Content, Prompting Employee Complaints*. May 3, 2023. Wall Street Journal. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/tiktok-tracked-users-who-watched-gay-content-prompting-employee-complaints-5966a5f5>

³ *TikTok Employees say Executive Moves to US Show China Parent's Influence*. September 27, 2023. Wall Street Journal. <https://www.wsj.com/tech/tiktok-employees-say-executive-moves-to-u-s-show-china-parents-influence-ef5ff21f>

I commend you for committing to be the most pro-labor President in American history. As your administration considers a qualified divestiture of TikTok, I urge you to keep in mind the unintended, yet very real and life-changing, consequences on thousands of Americans and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Laphonza Butler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L".

Laphonza Butler
United States Senator