

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
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<https://oversight.house.gov>

July 16, 2020

Jack Dorsey
Chief Executive Officer
Twitter
355 Market Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Dorsey:

Yesterday, in a matter of hours, Twitter became the platform for “one of the most visible cybercams in the internet’s history” when various high-profile Twitter accounts were commandeered and then used to commit fraud on the American people through the use of a cryptocurrency scam.¹ Accounts belonging to former President Barack Obama, former Vice President Joe Biden, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, and others were all almost simultaneously breached.² In a statement last night, Twitter stated these breaches were the result of “a coordinated social engineering attack by people who successfully targeted some of our employees with access to internal systems and tools.”³

The specifics of the attack remain unclear—at least to the public. One area of concern is whether the perpetrators gained access to individual users’ accounts or Twitter’s entire interface. Twitter’s failure not only created an opportunity for criminals to perpetrate a crime broadcasted to millions of Twitter’s users, but the hackers’ potential breach of Twitter’s security poses broader risks regarding hackers’ access to private direct messages.⁴

With 330 million monthly active users and 500 million tweets per day, Twitter is a platform on which individuals communicate their message to a broad audience.⁵ Indeed, the

¹ David Ingraham & Kevin Collier, *Biden, Gates, Musk: Bitcoin scam breaches some of world’s most prominent Twitter accounts*, NBCNews.com (July 15, 2020), <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/suspected-bitcoin-scammers-take-over-twitter-accounts-bill-gates-elon-n1233948> .

² Rish Iyengar, *Twitter blames ‘coordinated’ attack on its systems for hack of Joe Biden, Barack Obama, Bill Gates, and others*, CNN.com (July 15, 2020), <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/15/tech/twitter-hack-elon-musk-bill-gates/index.html> .

³ *Id.*

⁴ Letter from Hon. Josh Hawley, U.S. Senator to Mr. Jack Dorsey, Chief Executive Officer, Twitter (July 15, 2020) <https://www.hawley.senate.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/Hawley-Letter-Twitter-Hack.pdf>.

⁵ Twitter by the Numbers: Stats, Demographics & Fun Facts, <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/twitter-statistics/> (July 16, 2020).

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President, with 83.5 million followers, is a frequent user of Twitter, which allows him to break through the filter of traditional media and speak directly to all Americans and the world. Breaches similar to yesterday's have the potential to jeopardize national and economic security and disrupt the lives of millions of Americans. As such, please provide a briefing to Members of the Committee on Oversight and Reform no later than July 24, 2020. To schedule the briefing, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5074. At a minimum, the briefing should be prepared to address the following questions:

- 1) How many Twitter employees were targeted in the social engineering attack, and what disciplinary action has resulted?
- 2) What training is in place for Twitter employees to avoid social engineering attacks, and why did it fail?
- 3) Was the hacking done by a foreign adversary or a private entity?
- 4) Was your personal Twitter account among those breached? Does your personal account have an added layer of security that other accounts do not?
- 5) Were any non-verified Twitter accounts subject to the breach?
- 6) How quickly did Twitter alert the FBI to the breach?
- 7) How many Twitter accounts were subject to the breach, and what steps are in place to ensure the prevention of a system-wide breach?
- 8) What steps has Twitter taken to ensure a similar breach never occurs again?

The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Comer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Comer
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney, Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform