

Congressional CEO grillings can't solve disinformation: We need a public interest regulator | The Hill

By Brad Hanlon

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Last Thursday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held yet another hearing to grill social media CEOs about the mis- and disinformation on their platforms. While much of the hearing consisted of members soliciting soundbites from the executives on everything from social media's impacts on children to alleged anti-Conservative bias, one statement from Rep. Mike Doyle cut to the heart of the issue and incidentally highlighted exactly why hearings are an insufficient replacement for genuine oversight of the platforms.

"Time after time, you are picking engagement and profit over the health and safety of your users, our nation, and our democracy," Doyle said.

While hearings may make good political theater, they don't get us any closer to solving this problem. That's because more urgent action is necessary to force companies to address the tension between supporting a healthy information space, protecting free speech, and profits. To make sure this happens, Congress needs to step up and empower an independent expert regulator to serve in the public interest in overseeing major platform companies.

[...]

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