

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 15, 2025

Sundar Pichai
CEO
Google
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

Neal Mohan
CEO
YouTube
901 Cherry Avenue
San Bruno, CA 94066

Dear Mr. Pichai and Mr. Mohan:

We write seeking information on Google subsidiary YouTube's \$22 million settlement with President Trump, and on how the decision may relate to regulatory issues pending with the Trump administration.¹

In August 2025, we wrote to you with concerns that YouTube appeared to be preparing to settle a dubious lawsuit² in which President Trump, in his capacity as a private citizen, alleged that YouTube engaged in unlawful censorship when the company banned him from the platform following the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.³ We noted that, while YouTube was reportedly discussing next steps in the case, its parent company, Google, was facing multiple antitrust and labor enforcement actions by the federal government.⁴ We warned that if YouTube settled President Trump's lawsuit in exchange for favorable action by the Trump administration in other matters, the company and its executives could be at risk of violating federal anti-bribery laws and related state laws such as California's Unfair Competition Law.⁵

Recently, YouTube settled that censorship lawsuit with President Trump,⁶ in the midst of antitrust litigation with the Trump administration:

- On September 2, 2025, a federal judge determined the penalties in Google's online search monopoly case — an antitrust lawsuit that President Trump's Department of Justice

¹ Wall Street Journal, "YouTube to Pay \$24.5 Million to Settle Lawsuit Brought by Trump," Rebecca Ballhaus and Annie Linskey, September 29, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/law/youtube-to-pay-24-5-million-to-settle-lawsuit-brought-by-trump-808f6823>.

² Guardian, "Will Trump's big tech lawsuits succeed? Experts say chances are slim," Kari Paul, July 7, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jul/07/will-trumps-big-tech-lawsuits-succeed-experts-say-chances-are-slim>.

³ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Ron Wyden, Senator Peter Welch, and Senator Bernie Sanders to Google CEO Sundar Pichai and YouTube CEO Neal Mohan, August 7, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_google_and_youtube_re_potential_trump_settlement.pdf.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*; 18 U.S.C. 201; California Business & Professional Code, 17200 et seq.

⁶ Wall Street Journal, "YouTube to Pay \$24.5 Million to Settle Lawsuit Brought by Trump," Rebecca Ballhaus and Annie Linskey, September 29, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/law/youtube-to-pay-24-5-million-to-settle-lawsuit-brought-by-trump-808f6823>.

(DOJ) initially brought against the company in 2020.⁷ In the ruling, the judge rejected DOJ's efforts to require Google to divest its Chrome web browser, and instead ordered remedies that have been characterized as "almost a best-case scenario" for the company.⁸ Once the final judgment is complete, the Justice Department will have the opportunity to appeal.

- On September 4, 2025, just two days after Google's favorable antitrust ruling, President Trump hosted executives from Google and other tech companies at a White House dinner.⁹ At the dinner, President Trump referenced Google's online search monopoly case, saying to Mr. Pichai, "Google had a very good day yesterday. Do you want to talk about that big day you had yesterday?"¹⁰ Mr. Pichai responded saying, "I'm glad it's over," and, "[i]t's a long process. ... Appreciate that your administration had a constructive dialogue, and we were able to get it to some resolution."¹¹ "Right," President Trump replied.¹²
- On September 29, 2025, YouTube agreed to settle President Trump's censorship case for \$24.5 million¹³ — despite the fact that legal experts viewed the lawsuit as "likely doomed from the start," and YouTube as well-positioned to prevail in court.¹⁴ \$22 million of the settlement will be given to President Trump, which he has directed to be contributed, on his behalf, to the Trust for the National Mall, "to support the construction of the White House State Ballroom."¹⁵ President Trump has discussed his dream of a White House ballroom for over 15 years and reportedly values the ballroom as an opportunity to host large groups and "put his aesthetic stamp on the White House itself."¹⁶ According to a White House official, construction of the ballroom will continue throughout the federal

⁷ Reuters, "What comes next in Google's antitrust case over search?" Jody Godoy, September 2, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/technology/what-comes-next-googles-antitrust-case-over-search-2025-09-02>.

⁸ The New York Times, "Google Avoids Harsh Penalties in Landmark Search Monopoly Ruling," David McCabe, September 2, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/02/technology/google-search-antitrust-decision.html>; Barron's, "Google Ruling Shows Antitrust Is Dead. But This New Threat Is Very Much Alive.," Adam Clark, September 3, 2025, <https://www.barrons.com/articles/google-stock-antitrust-ruling-ai-things-to-know-today-9bfc4219>.

⁹ CNBC, "'I'm glad it's over.' Google CEO thanks Trump for antitrust 'resolution'," Jennifer Elias, September 5, 2025, <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/09/04/google-ceo-thanks-trump-for-antitrust-resolution.html>.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Wall Street Journal, "YouTube to Pay \$24.5 Million to Settle Lawsuit Brought by Trump," Rebecca Ballhaus and Annie Linskey, September 29, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/law/youtube-to-pay-24-5-million-to-settle-lawsuit-brought-by-trump-808f6823>.

¹⁴ NPR, "Donald Trump Sues Facebook, YouTube And Twitter For Alleged Censorship," Shannon Bond, July 7, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/07/1013760153/donald-trump-says-he-is-suing-facebook-google-and-twitter-for-alleged-censorship>.

¹⁵ CBS News, "YouTube to pay \$22 million for White House ballroom to settle lawsuit from Trump," Jacob Rosen, September 29, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/youtube-settles-trump-lawsuit-white-house-ballroom>.

¹⁶ NPR, "Why Trump is obsessed with building a White House ballroom," Tamara Keith, July 29, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/30/nx-s1-5425497/trump-whitehouse-ballroom>.

government shutdown,¹⁷ while hundreds of thousands of federal employees are suspended from work without pay, and many core government functions cease.¹⁸

The public deserves to know what “constructive dialogue” the Trump administration and Google had, given that Google and the Trump administration are opposing parties in the antitrust case, and whether this dialogue was in any way connected to YouTube’s settlement with President Trump. Specifically, the public deserves to know whether YouTube’s settlement will influence the Trump Justice Department’s decision regarding whether to appeal and seek the stricter remedies DOJ had originally sought against Google.

According to the federal bribery statute, it is illegal to “corruptly give[] ... anything of value to any public official ... with intent ... to influence any official act.”¹⁹ If, for example, YouTube settled President Trump’s legally dubious lawsuit to discourage the President’s Justice Department from appealing a ruling favorable to Google, the company and its executives may have run afoul of the law.

In your September 17, 2025 response to our letter you stated, “there has been no discussion tying any potential settlement of the case to any official action or to any pending or potential future matters involving Alphabet or any of its affiliates, and there will be no such discussions.”²⁰ In the wake of this settlement, we have additional questions about this matter.

In order to inform our legislative activity regarding antitrust matters, government ethics, and anti-corruption laws — including legislation to crack down on the risk of quid-pro-quo arrangements between the President and private companies that donate to organizations benefitting the President — we ask that you answer the following questions by October 29, 2025:

1. Which Google or YouTube officials were involved in discussions about the \$22 million settlement with President Trump? Please provide information regarding the timing, nature of, and participants in these discussions, including whether DOJ’s pending action or any other pending action from the Trump Administration regarding Google or YouTube was discussed.
2. Did you, any other executives, and/or board members agree — either through a formal written agreement or an unwritten understanding — to settling President Trump’s lawsuit against YouTube as a way to garner more favorable treatment from the administration on DOJ’s pending matters involving Google or potential future matters? If so, please provide information regarding the timing, nature of, and participants in these discussions.

¹⁷ ABC News, “White House ballroom construction to continue through shutdown, official says,” Michelle Stoddart, October 1, 2025, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/live-updates/trump-admin-live-updates/?id=126029955&entryId=126119426>.

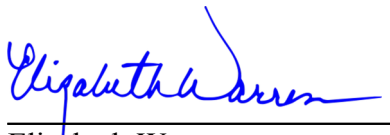
¹⁸ Federal News Network, “Here’s a look at federal agencies’ shutdown contingency plans,” Stephanie Wright, September 30, 2025, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/government-shutdown/2025/09/heres-a-look-at-federal-agencies-contingency-plans-as-shutdown-looms>.

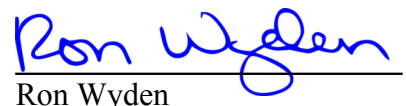
¹⁹ 18 U.S.C. 201.

²⁰ Letter from Google to Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Ron Wyden, Senator Peter Welch, and Senator Bernie Sanders, September 17, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_senators_warren_wyden_welch_and_sanders.pdf.

3. Please describe any discussions between Mr. Pichai and President Trump at the President's September 4 White House dinner.
 - a. Specifically, did they discuss the online search monopoly lawsuit against Google beyond the exchange described above? If yes, what did they discuss?
 - b. Did they discuss President Trump's lawsuit against YouTube?
 - c. Did Google commit to donating to President Trump's campaign, Presidential Library Fund, or White House ballroom?
4. Is Google or YouTube otherwise engaging the Trump administration in any way to secure favorable treatment in any pending legal or enforcement matters or potential future matters? If so, please describe Google's and YouTube's actions.
5. Have officials from your company discussed making concessions with President Trump or Trump administration officials in the context of legal or enforcement matters or potential transactions?
6. Did Google, YouTube, or any of the companies' affiliates, at any time in the context of YouTube's decision to settle President Trump's suit against the company, have any conversations with President Trump or any Trump administration officials?
 - a. If so, what was the nature of these discussions?
 - b. Did you offer — or were you offered — any regulatory favors in exchange for your decision?
7. Please provide a copy of the Settlement Agreements referenced in the Notice of Settlement signed on September 29, 2025.²¹
 - a. Who served as the mediator(s) of the settlement discussions between President Trump and YouTube? Please provide the name of the individual(s) and their relationship to any party in this suit.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator

²¹ Trump v. YouTube, LLC, NOTICE OF SETTLEMENT AND STIPULATION OF DISMISSAL PURSUANT TO FED R. CIV. P. 41(a)(1)(A)(ii) at 2, 21-cv-08009-YGR (N.D. Cal. Sept. 29, 2025), https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.cand.386486/gov.uscourts.cand.386486.178.0_2.pdf.



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator