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12 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
13 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, SAN JOSE DIVISION

14
15 Kimberly Carleste Newman, Lisa Cabrera,
Catherine Jones, and Denotra Nicole Lewis,

16 Plaintiffs,

17 vs.

18 Google LLC, YouTube LLC, Alphabet Inc,
19 and DOES 1 through 100, inclusive,

20 Defendants.

Case No.

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR
DECLARATORY JUDGMENT,
RESTITUTION AND DAMAGES**

Trial Date: None Set

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1 Plaintiffs, Kimberly Carleste Newman, Lisa Cabrera, Catherine Jones, and Denotra Nicole
2 Lewis, bring this lawsuit (the “Lawsuit”), individually and on behalf of a putative class of similarly
3 situated persons, against Defendant YouTube LLC (“YouTube”), and its parent companies,
4 Google LLC (“Google”) and Alphabet Inc. (collectively referred to as “Google/YouTube” or
5 “Defendants,” unless otherwise specified).

6 Substantial overlaps exists between the claims, allegations, putative classes and issues in
7 this Lawsuit with case pending before this Court captioned *Divino Group, LLC et al., v. Google,*
8 *LLC, et al*, Case No. 5:19-cv-004749 – VKD (N.D. Cal.) (“*Divino*”). After reviewing Civil L.R. 3-
9 12 governing related cases, it is unclear whether this Lawsuit technically meets the specific criteria
10 and elements required for relation under Local Rule 3-12. Specifically, this Lawsuit does not
11 involve *all* of “the same parties,” or the identical “property” owned by the same parties in *Divino*. It
12 is also unclear whether the “transactions” are the same within the meaning of Local Rule 3-12 or
13 whether the “events” consist of the identical unlawful conduct of restricting of access to the
14 YouTube platform based on the profiling and discriminatory use of a person’s personal identity or
15 viewpoint in *Divino* that may be different from the racial identity profiling and discrimination
16 against Plaintiffs and the members of the Class in this Lawsuit. Consequently, while Plaintiffs do
17 not believe that all of the requirements for designating the Lawsuit “related” come within the
18 definition of Local Rule 3-12, Plaintiffs are not opposed to having this Lawsuit related to, or
19 otherwise coordinated with, the pending proceedings in *Divino*.

20 **I. INTRODUCTION AND PREFATORY STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

21 1. Plaintiffs are African American content creators, viewers, and consumers who bring
22 this Lawsuit to redress overt, intentional, and systematic racial discrimination perpetrated by
23 Google/YouTube to deny them and other members of a protected racial classification under the law
24 equal access to YouTube, the most “ubiquitous” provider of public video content and internet
25 access services in the history of the world.

26 2. Defendants are members of the largest business enterprise, private or public, in the
27 world. Through this enterprise, Defendants exercise complete, absolute, and “unfettered” control
28 over access to approximately 95% of all video content that is available to the public. This includes

1 absolute control over any and all posting, viewing, engagement, advertising, personal data, and
2 revenue monetization rights of the 2.3 billion consumers who access and use YouTube.

3 3. Defendants are also the largest creators, promoters, and sponsors of video content on
4 YouTube. Thus, in addition to hosting and regulating video content and services on YouTube,
5 Defendants compete directly with Plaintiffs and their content for the same access, audiences,
6 viewership, advertising, marketing, and revenue based services on YouTube.

7 4. In exercising these unprecedented powers, Defendants contract with Plaintiffs and
8 all persons similarly situated to provide equal access to YouTube and all of its related services,
9 subject only to viewpoint neutral content rules and criteria that apply equally to all.

10 5. In reality, however, Defendants' access restrictions and denials imposed on
11 Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated are not the result of an identity and viewpoint blind
12 review and application of the rules to actual video material. Instead, Defendants have an
13 irreconcilable commercial conflict of interest: on the one hand, Defendants act as content creators
14 or sponsors of video content, competing directly with Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated
15 for the same services, audiences, advertisers, and revenue streams on the YouTube platform; on the
16 other hand, Defendants act as absolute regulators and monetizers of all YouTube content and
17 services, and exercise unfettered authority to determine viewer and service access by enforcing
18 their Community Guidelines and Terms of Service (the "TOS") against their competitors, based on
19 the identity or viewpoint of Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated.

20 6. Under the pretext of honest content and service regulation, Defendants rig the game,
21 by using their power to restrict and block Plaintiffs and other similarly situated competitors, based
22 on racial identity or viewpoint discrimination for profit. Defendants also abuse their power by not
23 subjecting their own videos to the same Community Guidelines and TOS that they apply to all
24 other YouTube users. As a result, Defendants are not subject to filtering or blocking restrictions,
25 even where Defendants' videos contain material that violates their own rules.

26 7. Among the many abuses that Defendants have perpetrated against Plaintiffs and all
27 other persons similarly situated, are Defendants' practices of allowing racist hate speech to go
28 unregulated on Plaintiffs' channels, resulting in lost subscribers and viewership, and the

1 surreptitious “bugging” of Plaintiffs’ videos by the insertion, attachment, appending, or embedding
2 of metadata and other signals that allow Defendants’ filtering tools to target Plaintiffs and all other
3 persons similarly situated, based on race, identity and/or the viewpoint of the creator, her channel
4 subscribers, and viewers.

5 8. This intentional and systematic racial discrimination violates Defendants’ legal
6 obligations under the contract(s), and is unlawful under federal and state antidiscrimination laws,
7 false advertising, unlawful business practices, and free speech laws. It is unlawful whether it is
8 done for profit, or out of ideological animus.

9 9. Interfering with the contractual and legal rights of Plaintiffs and all persons similarly
10 situated to access and use YouTube based in any way, part, or degree on their race, identity or
11 viewpoint, violates YouTube’s TOS and is unlawful under the strict prohibitions against racial
12 discrimination in contract and business practices enshrined in federal and California law. That is
13 racism, overt intentional and systematic.

14 10. Defendants knowingly, intentionally, and systematically employ artificial
15 intelligence (“A.I.”), algorithms, computer and machine based filtering and review tools to “target”
16 Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated, by using information about their racial, identity
17 and viewpoint to restrict access and drive them off YouTube.

18 11. Under the pretext of finding that videos violate some vague, ambiguous, and non-
19 specific video content rule, Defendants use computer driven racial, identity and viewpoint profiling
20 and filtering tools to restrict, censor, and denigrate Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated on
21 YouTube, wholly or in part, because they are African American, black, members of a protected
22 racial classification under the law, or identify as such, or with a related viewpoint.

23 12. Since at least 2017, Defendants’ filtering and review tools and procedures are
24 embedded with computer code or other machine based “triggers” that profile the personal racial
25 identity or viewpoint of the user. Defendants admit that their filtering tools use information about
26 the identity of the YouTube creators, subscribers and viewers to “target” members of protected
27 racial classifications under the law and impose access restrictions on them that are not racially,
28 identity or viewpoint neutral; nor are they based on, or supported by actual material in the videos;

1 and Defendants treat such videos as if they violate YouTube’s content based Community
2 Guidelines and TOS, by denying full YouTube platform access and related services.

3 13. On March 19, 2017, Defendants publicly admitted that they improperly censored
4 videos using their “Restricted Mode” filtering that were posted or produced by members of the
5 LGBTQ+ Community, based upon the identity and orientation of the speaker, rather than upon the
6 content of the video. Defendants also promised to remove all restricted filtering on videos posted
7 or produced by LGBTQ+ members and groups, and changed their filtering algorithm, and manual
8 review policies and practices to address the risk that videos posted by LGBTQ+ vloggers were
9 being censored because of the identity or viewpoint of the speaker.

10 14. On April 27, 2017, Johanna Wright, Vice President of Product Management for
11 Google/YouTube, took to the airwaves and news media to promise the global “YouTube
12 Community,” that Defendants would ensure that “Restricted Mode” would not “filter out content
13 belonging to individuals or groups based on certain attributes like gender, gender identity, political
14 viewpoints, race, religion or sexual orientation.” While Ms. Wright conceded that “Restricted
15 Mode will never be perfect, [Google/YouTube] hope to build on [their] progress so far to continue
16 making [their] systems more accurate and the overall “Restricted Mode” experience better over
17 time.”

18 15. On September 14, 2017, Defendants invited independent YouTubers and content
19 creators to address concerns that the platform’s video review algorithm and practices discriminated
20 against certain minority groups, including LGBTQ+, African American, and other users of color or
21 vulnerable minorities. At the meeting, Defendants admitted that their content filtering and review
22 tools were “targeting” African American, LGBTQ+, and other “minority” users. They further
23 admitted that this resulted in the application of erroneous or unwarranted blocking restrictions and
24 access denials for users that were based, at least in part, on the user’s racial or sexual identity or
25 viewpoints, rather than a content violation of YouTube’s rules or Terms of Service.

26 16. Defendants also represented that they were working on a “fix,” and that neither user
27 identity nor viewpoint has any role in the application of YouTube’s content based access rules and
28

1 restrictions or should otherwise interfere with a user’s right to access the myriad of services that
2 Defendants offer to users.¹

3 17. But things have only gotten worse with respect to Defendants’ racial profiling and
4 “targeting” of African American and members of other protected racial classifications under the
5 law who use YouTube.

6 18. In January 2018, Defendants got caught red handed. During a recorded call between
7 a user and a supervisor, who Defendants now identify as the “Floor Manager” for their customer
8 service advertising services center in Bangalore, India, Defendants represented to the user that its
9 “holiday special” video was not eligible for advertising services because the filtering tools had
10 identified the user as being involved with the “gay thing.” Under what the manager expressly
11 stated was “company policy,” the filtering algorithm determined that the video contained
12 “shocking” or “sexually explicit” content, not because of any actual material in the video, but
13 because the “company” considered video content created by a “gay” user or content that discussed
14 the “gay thing” as ineligible for advertising or promotion. Defendants considered content created
15 or viewed by “gay” persons to be “shocking” or “sexually explicit.”

16 19. This pattern and practice or “policy” of denying users equal access to YouTube
17 based on their racial, sexual, or other individual identities or viewpoints occurred to the same user
18 after the January 2018 call with Defendants, on at least five other occasions. The pattern and
19 practice has become so pervasive that many prominent and quality content creators have lost more
20 than 90% of their viewers, advertisers, revenue, and other access rights in the last 24 months solely

21
22
23 ¹ One of the persons who attended the meeting is Stephanie Frosch, a prominent and popular
24 LGBTQ+ content creator on YouTube. Ms. Frosch is a named plaintiff in another class action
25 lawsuit pending in this District, captioned *Divino Group, et al. v. Google LLC, et al.*, Case No.
26 5:19-cv-004749-VKD (N.D. Cal.). In that case, Ms. Frosch testified under oath she and the
27 other attendees were required to execute multiple non-disclosure agreements (the “NDAs”) before
28 and at the event. The NDAs prevented her, and any anyone else who attended the meeting, from
disclosing any information about the meeting. On March 23, 2020, after Plaintiffs threatened to
move to set aside the NDAs as void and unenforceable, Defendants agreed to release her from her
obligations under the NDAs. *See* Declaration of Stephanie Frosch Submitted in Support of
Plaintiffs’ Application to File a Sur Reply to Address New Authority. A true and correct copy of
the Declaration of Stephanie Frosch (Dkt. #40) is attached as Exhibit A.

1 because they are identified as African American, LGBTQ+ or other protected racial classifications
2 under the law.

3 20. The Plaintiffs in this Lawsuit also face the same sort of overt, intentional, and
4 systemic identity and viewpoint discrimination, with one important difference: Defendants do not
5 discriminate against Plaintiffs only because of sex based identity or viewpoint profiling, but
6 primarily because they identify as African American, or with other protected racial classifications
7 under the law.

8 21. This is unlawful race discrimination. Unlike any other form of prohibited
9 discrimination, it has been outlawed in the United States since 1865, when Congress enacted
10 section 1981 and other civil rights laws intended to wipe out, prohibit, and make any and all racial
11 discrimination in contracts and business practices unlawful.

12 22. Defendants know and admit that they discriminate, including admissions that since
13 at least 2017, they use content based filtering and access review tools, systems, and practices that
14 “target” African Americans and other members of protected racial classifications under the law.

15 23. Nonetheless, Defendants have failed to “fix” the discriminatory defects in their
16 content and access review systems and stop the “targeting” as promised. Defendants continue to
17 knowingly, intentionally, and systematically block, demonetize, and deny Plaintiffs and other
18 persons similarly situated, their contractual and other legal rights to access YouTube based on the
19 color of their skin or other protected racial traits, rather than the material in their videos.

20 24. Defendants also abuse their dual roles as content reviewers and content creators on
21 YouTube. Specifically, under the pretext of unfettered “discretion” to serve as sole “censors” of
22 content on the YouTube platform, Defendants use racial profiling to restrict the reach and access of
23 Plaintiffs and other third party users who compete directly with Defendants and their sponsored
24 video content for click per minute (“CPM”), advertising, and other revenue stream and services on
25 YouTube.

26 25. Instead of “fixing” the digital racism that pervades the filtering, restricting, and
27 blocking of user content and access on YouTube, Defendants have decided to double down and
28 continue their racist and identity based practices because they are profitable. By utilizing their

1 unilateral control over 95% of the world’s public video content, Defendants unlawfully
2 misappropriate viewers, CPM, advertising, and other revenues that belong to, or would otherwise
3 be available to, Plaintiffs and other third party users, but for the discriminatory restrictions that
4 unlawfully restrict and block Plaintiffs’ content and access to YouTube services.

5 26. This is race discrimination. It is knowing and intentional. Defendants knowingly
6 used and continue to use discriminatory content filtering review tools and procedures that “target”
7 Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, for access restrictions because they are African
8 American, persons of color, or are identified by Defendants as having an ethnicity or other personal
9 immutable traits and/or viewpoints, not because the actual video content or material violates
10 YouTube’s purportedly neutral content rules.

11 27. Defendants’ racist profiling and practices are also systematic. By using A.I.,
12 algorithms and other computerized machine based filtering tools (in lieu of having humans perform
13 the “ubiquitous” task of reviewing and deciding whether the material or content in billions of hours
14 of videos uploaded daily to YouTube) to sanction Plaintiffs, Defendants engage in a knowing and
15 intentional practice that unlawfully discriminates against users based on race or other protected
16 racial classifications under the law, or viewpoints.

17 28. Defendants’ conduct is knowing, intentional, and systematic, regardless of whether
18 Defendants are motivated by ideological animus towards black and members of other protected
19 racial classifications under the law, or they merely use racial and identity profiling to restrict access
20 for profit, and/or to save costs, resources, labor, and time necessary to lawfully review actual video
21 content and determine, in a viewpoint neutral manner, whether a rule violation has occurred that
22 triggers a content based access restriction or sanction on YouTube. In short, Defendants’ use of
23 racism for profit is every bit unlawful as ideological racism, since, in either case, it discriminates
24 against Plaintiffs because they are African Americans or members of other protected racial
25 classifications under the law.

26 29. Defendants do not disagree. Susan Wojcicki, YouTube’s CEO, has taken to the
27 airwaves over the last three years to repeatedly and unequivocally deny that Defendants
28 discriminate against anyone when it comes to content or access restrictions to YouTube, while

1 insisting that all decisions, wrong or right, are the product of good faith, viewpoint neutral, and
2 identity blind content reviews and decisions.

3 30. On or about June 14, 2020, Wojcicki publicly announced that in conjunction with
4 Alphabet, Defendant YouTube was starting a \$100 million fund "dedicated to amplifying and
5 developing the voices of Black creators and artists and their stories." In a [blog post](#) Thursday,
6 Wojcicki said, "At YouTube, we believe Black lives matter and we all need to do more to
7 dismantle systemic racism." See [https://www.marketwatch.com/story/youtube-is-starting-a-100-](https://www.marketwatch.com/story/youtube-is-starting-a-100-million-fund-for-black-creators-artists-2020-06-11)
8 [million-fund-for-black-creators-artists-2020-06-11](https://www.marketwatch.com/story/youtube-is-starting-a-100-million-fund-for-black-creators-artists-2020-06-11).

9 31. Given Defendants' stated concerns regarding systemic racism, Defendants have
10 some serious explaining to do when it comes to the Plaintiffs and the other persons similarly
11 situated using YouTube. Plaintiffs would prefer that Defendants spend their money to stop the
12 racist practices that pervade the YouTube platform, including:

13 a. **Abusing Artificial Intelligence Programs, Algorithms and Other**
14 **Filtering Tools** to digitally profile, redline, and target Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated
15 on the YouTube platform, for access restrictions, blocking, demonetization, suspensions and
16 removals from the platform based on the racial identity or viewpoint of the video creator, her
17 subscribers, and/or the viewers of her videos by inserting or appending to individual videos race,
18 identity or viewpoint based metadata, thereby forcing Plaintiffs to self-censor and refrain from
19 posting videos regarding issues and current events which are important to the African American
20 community, such as requiring Plaintiffs to avoid or hide references to abbreviations like "BLM,"
21 "KKK;" terms such as "Black," "White," "Racism," "Boogaloo," "White Supremacy," "Racial
22 Profiling," "Police Shootings," "Police Brutality," "Black Lives Matter;" names of individuals such
23 as those killed by law enforcement, "Bill Cosby," "Louis Farrakhan;" names of organizations such
24 as "Ku Klux Klan," "Nazi," "Neo-Nazi," "Aryan Brotherhood," and/or other euphemisms that are
25 known and particular to the African American community, despite the fact that the videos involved
26 do not contain any hate speech, profanity, or nudity, and at most, contain very short references or
27 quotations from recognized news sources, which are properly attributed.

28

1 b. **Preventing Full Revenue Generation** for videos of Plaintiffs and all
2 persons similarly situated who are not afforded full monetization, Channel Membership and
3 Livestream donations for videos that are otherwise eligible under Defendants’ rules, but have been
4 demonetized or limited in monetization because of Defendants’ addition of metadata and use of
5 algorithms and filtering tools that profile creators, subscribers and viewers based on their race or
6 viewpoint, rather than on the actual content of the video.

7 c. **Misapplying “Restricted Mode”** to the videos of Plaintiffs and all persons
8 similarly situated, which address or discuss issues of importance to their communities, merely
9 because the videos have titles or tags which include “abbreviations like “BLM,” “KKK;” terms
10 such as “Black,” “White,” “Racism,” “Boogaloo,” “White Supremacy,” “Racial Profiling,” “Police
11 Shootings,” “Police Brutality,” “Black Lives Matter;” names of individuals such as those killed by
12 law enforcement, “Bill Cosby,” “Louis Farrakhan;” names of organizations such as “Ku Klux
13 Klan,” “Nazi,” “Neo-Nazi,” “Aryan Brotherhood,” and/or other euphemisms that are known and
14 particular to the African American community, despite the fact that the videos do not contain
15 materials which discuss drug use or the abuse or drinking of alcohol; overly detailed conversations
16 about or depictions of sexual activity; graphic depictions of violence, violent acts; natural disasters
17 or tragedies or violence in the news; specific details about events related to terrorism, war, crime
18 and political conflicts that resulted in death or serious injury, even if no graphic imagery is shown;
19 inappropriate language, including profanity, or content that is gratuitously incendiary,
20 inflammatory, or demeaning toward an individual or group.

21 d. **Shadow Banning Entire Channels And Individual Videos** of Plaintiffs
22 and all persons similarly situated on the YouTube platform based on the race, identity or viewpoint
23 of the video creator, her subscribers, and/or the viewers of her videos, so that the channel and/or
24 individual videos do not appear in searches using the YouTube search application, and viewers
25 cannot locate new videos which discuss issues and current events that are important to the
26 communities of African Americans and members of other protected racial classifications under the
27 law.

28

1 e. **Deputizing Other YouTube Users To Flag Channels And Videos** on the
2 YouTube platform in order to restrict, block, and/or censor the videos of Plaintiffs and all persons
3 similarly situated, and then, in acting on false or unconfirmed complaints of purported rule
4 violations, Defendants remove, restrict, and/or demonetize, individual videos and/or suspend the
5 channels without first verifying that the flagged video contains material that violates a specific
6 Community Guideline or Term of Service.

7 f. **Interfering With Livestream Broadcasts** of Plaintiffs and all persons
8 similarly situated by inserting new voice content and/or visual images into the video stream,
9 unrelated to the Livestream topic; throttling, interrupting or cutting off the Livestream broadcast
10 while in progress; deleting positive viewer comments; and promoting, sponsoring, allowing and/or
11 inserting offensive, misogynistic, racist, or obscene comments or engagement in direct violation of
12 YouTube’s Community Guidelines based on the race of the creators, channel subscribers and/or
13 viewers, or their viewpoints.

14 g. **Excluding From “Trending” And “Up Next” YouTube Video**
15 **Recommendations** the videos of Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated which, even though
16 they comply with Defendants’ Community Guidelines and TOS, are excluded from Defendants’
17 promotional applications based on the race, identities, and viewpoints of the creators, channel
18 subscribers and/or viewers. Defendants’ practices muffle the voices of Plaintiffs and all persons
19 similarly situated on the YouTube platform and reduce the racial diversity of the opinions and
20 information posted on the platform.

21 h. **Freezing Analytic Numbers Of Subscribers And Viewers** for the channels
22 of Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated. In suspending the accurate analytic information for
23 the channels of Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated, Defendants prevent them from
24 qualifying for YouTube Partnership benefits such as monetization, mobile Livestreaming, Channel
25 Membership, and SuperChat; as well as deprive them of the opportunity to grow their channels and
26 generate revenue.

27 i. **Promoting And Profiting From Hate Speech** by allowing racist and
28 misogynist hate speech videos that target Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated on the

1 YouTube platform in direct violation of Defendants’ Community Guidelines and TOS, and
2 affording such videos monetization, despite the fact that such videos have been flagged by
3 Plaintiffs and/or their subscribers as violating Defendants’ standards, and despite having received
4 repeated complaints regarding those videos.

5 j. **Interfering With, Obstructing, Delaying And Ignoring Appeals** to
6 prevent Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated from obtaining a timely manual review of video
7 content and reversal of Defendants’ erroneous decisions to suspend their channels and to remove,
8 restrict monetization, or restrict access to videos deprives them of their rights to communicate with
9 their intended audience and/or to earn revenue, unless and until, Defendants lift the suspension,
10 removal, and/or restriction, if ever.

11 32. Regardless of what Defendants’ internal motivations are, Defendants are not above
12 the law nor are they too big to “self-regulate” by complying with the law, including the long
13 established prohibition on race discrimination in contract.

14 33. Until such time as Defendants make good on their promises, representations, and
15 obligations to “fix” this racism and compensate Plaintiffs and other similarly situated victims of
16 Defendants’ unlawful and repugnant discriminatory conduct, Defendants will continue to engage in
17 intentional race discrimination that violates their agreements with Plaintiffs, as well as established
18 federal and state laws that govern the relationship between the parties.

19 34. Plaintiffs can no longer wait for Defendants to implement the “fix” they promised
20 years ago. Nor should they have to. Whether Defendants’ “motive” for refusing to do so is based
21 on profit, ideology, or “no reason at all,” the knowing use of a person’s, race, skin color or some
22 other immutable personal trait or viewpoint to filter and review access to YouTube, is digital racial
23 profiling, redlining, and discrimination. It is illegal.

24 35. It is time for Ms. Wojcicki, and the other senior officers of Google YouTube, to put
25 up or shut up. If Defendants truly believe that they are engaged in good faith, viewpoint neutral
26 content regulation on YouTube, then Defendants should produce the computer code and permit an
27 expert review of that code to examine the “triggers” for review and restriction of content.
28 Defendants can then, under oath in deposition and other sworn testimony, and through other

1 discovery, explain to Plaintiffs, the Court, and the public why their prior admissions and other
2 evidence of “targeting” African Americans and members of other protected racial classifications
3 under the law, are not true.

4 36. Until that time, Defendants’ unsupported denials, or recent portrayal of the
5 discriminatory conduct as “mistakes” or the result of a “he said, she said” misunderstanding
6 between its employees and officers, is not a lawful reason to deny Plaintiffs their day in court.

7 37. Despite a whole lot of “telling,” Defendants have made no attempt to “show” that
8 their actions do not discriminate based on the race, identity or viewpoint of Plaintiffs or the
9 hundreds of millions of other users who fall victim to discrimination by Defendants.

10 38. Defendants’ refusal to do so is mystifying, if not damning. The computer code and
11 information about how Defendants’ A.I., algorithms, and other machine based filtering operate,
12 developed and have changed since Defendants purchased YouTube in 2007. Such evidence will
13 resolve the extent to which Defendants use filtering tools to profile and discriminate against
14 YouTube users based on their race, identity or viewpoints.

15 39. For whatever reason, Defendants do not deny they are engaged in intentional and
16 systematic racial discrimination on YouTube, but only that they can be held to account under the
17 law. Despite informal and formal legal requests for the computer code and information about how
18 content filtering works on YouTube, Defendants claim that section 230(c) of the Communication
19 Decency Act (47 U.S.C., § 230(c)) (“Section 230(c)”) is both a sword and a shield to hide the
20 computer code and other evidence that will show, once and for all, whether Ms. Wojcicki’s denials
21 of unlawful conduct are in fact true, or are just another in a line of false, misleading, and deceptive
22 statements to the YouTube Community.

23 40. Defendants’ use of Section 230(c) to immunize them from having to account for
24 intentional discrimination against African Americans and other members of protected racial
25 classifications under the law, based on the users’ race, sex, or other identity or viewpoint, is itself
26 unlawful.

27 41. Under the First Amendment, the United States Supreme Court in *Denver Area*
28 *Educational Telecommuns. Consortium, Inc. v. Federal Communications Comm’n*, 518 U.S. 727,

1 766-67 (1996), confirmed the obvious: a congressional law that permits a private party to regulate
 2 speech is unlawful and unconstitutional unless the law (i) is applied in a viewpoint neutral manner,
 3 (ii) is narrowly tailored so as not to create a risk of an erroneous private veto over speech, **and** (iii)
 4 does not interfere with or otherwise alter or obstruct the parties' existing legal relationship,
 5 obligations, and rights or the enforcement of those rights and obligations in a court of law.

6 42. Defendants' assertion that Section 230(c) permits them to use a person's race,
 7 identity or viewpoint to block access to YouTube is unconstitutional because, at least as applied to
 8 this Lawsuit, the law is neither (i) viewpoint neutral, (ii) narrowly tailored to prevent against an
 9 erroneous veto of speech by Defendants under its rules, and/or (iii) interferes with and eviscerates
 10 Defendants' preexisting legal obligations to Plaintiffs under state and federal law, including
 11 antidiscrimination, false advertising, consumer protection, and the express and implied promises set
 12 forth in Defendants' operative contract(s) with Plaintiffs.

13 43. Plaintiffs file this lawsuit, therefore, to hold Defendants to account for their
 14 intentional and systemic racist conduct and practices, by asserting claims for legal and equitable
 15 relief:

- 16 (i.) Breach of contract, implied breach of contract covenant, and promissory estoppel;
- 17 (ii.) Racial discrimination in contract in violation of federal law under 42 U.S.C. § 1981;
- 18 (iii.) Racial discrimination in violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 51,
 19 *et seq.*;
- 20 (iv.) Unlawful, deceptive, and unfair discriminatory business practices in violation of the
 21 Unfair Competition Laws under California Business and Professions Code § 17200, *et seq.*;
- 22 (v.) False advertising and commercial disparagement in violation of the Lanham Act, 15
 23 U.S.C. § 1125, *et seq.*;
- 24 (vi) Discrimination in violation of the Liberty of Speech Clause under Article I, Section 2 of
 25 the California Constitution; and
- 26 (vii) Discrimination in violation of First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution arising from
 27 Defendants' use of Section 230(c) to immunize them from liability for discrimination.

28

1 44. In addition, Plaintiffs also seek a declaratory judgment that: either (i) the plain
2 language Section 230(c) does not apply to racial profiling and discriminatory access restrictions
3 that are based on a person’s race, identity, or viewpoints, rather than the “on line material” that
4 actually appears on YouTube; or (ii) if Section 230(c) is construed to permit on line racial, identity
5 or viewpoint based discrimination restrictions against YouTube users, Section 230(c) is
6 unconstitutional because it violates the First Amendment’s limits on permissive private party
7 speech regulation.

8

9 **II. PARTIES**

10 45. Plaintiff Kimberly Carleste Newman, also known as Kimberly Santana (“Plaintiff
11 Newman”), is an African American woman residing in the State of California who is the creator
12 and owner of “The True Royal Family,” and “True Royal,” two YouTube channels dedicated to
13 developing and posting videos that discuss and present information regarding issues and current
14 events which are important to the African American community. Plaintiff Newman created “The
15 True Royal Family” channel in 2015, followed by “True Royal,” in 2016. Since its creation,
16 Plaintiff Newman’s “The True Royal Family” channel has posted more than 1654 separate videos,
17 only 954 of which are still posted because Defendants removed 700 or more individual videos and
18 have refused to restore them; the “True Royal” channel has posted 209 videos. “The True Royal
19 Family” channel has garnered a total of 4.4 million views since creation, and the “True Royal”
20 channel has garnered 583,000 views since creation. Plaintiff Newman is a YouTube “partner,” and
21 has generated total revenue of \$2,672.68 for videos posted on “The True Royal Family,” and
22 \$123.96 for videos posted on “True Royal.”

23 46. Plaintiff Lisa Cabrera (“Plaintiff Cabrera”) is an African American woman residing
24 in the State of New Jersey who is the creator and owner of “Lisa Cabrera” and “Lisa C,” two
25 YouTube channels dedicated to developing and posting videos that discuss and present information
26 regarding issues and current events which are important to the African American community.
27 Plaintiff Cabrera created the “Lisa Cabrera” channel in 2015. Since creation, Plaintiff Cabrera’s
28 “Lisa Cabrera” channel has posted 4,423 videos (68 of which Defendants archived for unknown

1 reasons and can no longer be viewed by anyone), which have garnered 20 million views. Plaintiff
2 Cabrera is a YouTube partner who has generated a total of \$25,500 for videos posted on the “Lisa
3 Cabrera” channel.

4 47. Plaintiff Catherine Jones (“Plaintiff Jones”) is an African American woman residing
5 in the State of Vermont who is the creator and owner of “Cooking with Carmen Caboom,” a
6 YouTube cooking channel for African Americans, and “Carmen Caboom,” and “Carmen Caboom
7 Reloaded,” two YouTube channels dedicated to developing and posting both parodies and serious
8 videos that discuss and present information about issues and current events which are important to
9 the African American community. Plaintiff Jones created the “Carmen Caboom” channel in 2010,
10 a backup “Carmen Caboom” channel in 2014, the “Cooking with Carmen Caboom” channel in
11 2015 and the “Carmen Caboom Reloaded,” channel in 2018. Defendants improperly removed the
12 original “Carmen Caboom” channel for purported nudity when no video posted to the channel
13 included any nudity. Plaintiff Jones is a YouTube partner. Since creation, Plaintiff Jones’ 2014
14 “Carmen Caboom” channel has posted numerous videos, several of which Defendants improperly
15 removed as hate speech, the remaining videos have garnered approximately 500 -1,200 views per
16 video overall which have generated approximately \$500 per year.

17 48. Plaintiff Denotra Nicole Lewis (“Plaintiff Lewis”) is an African American woman
18 residing in the State of Texas who is the creator and owner of “Nicole’s View,” a YouTube channel
19 dedicated to developing and posting videos that discuss and present information regarding issues
20 and current events which are important to the African American community. Plaintiff Lewis
21 created the “Nicole’s View” channel in 2006. She became a YouTube partner sometime between
22 2016 and 2017. Plaintiff Lewis has uploaded 748 videos to the “Nicole’s View” channel, 17 of
23 which Defendants wrongly removed or archived for unknown reasons, the remainder of which have
24 generated 10.6 million views and has generated approximately \$6,000-7,000 in revenue per year,
25 approximately \$25,000 over the life of the channel.

26 49. Defendant YouTube, LLC is a for-profit limited liability corporation, wholly owned
27 by Google LLC, and organized under the laws of the State of Delaware. YouTube’s principal place
28 of business is Mountain View, California and it regularly conducts business throughout California,

1 including Santa Clara County, California. Defendant YouTube, LLC operates the largest and most
2 popular internet video viewer site, platform, and service in California, the United States, and the
3 world, and holds itself out as one of the most important and largest public forums for the
4 expression of ideas and exchange of speech available to the public. Plaintiffs are informed and
5 believe that at all relevant times Defendant YouTube, LLC acts as an agent of Defendant Google
6 LLC and uses, relies on, and participates with Defendant Google LLC in restricting speech on the
7 YouTube site, platform, or service.

8 50. Defendant Google LLC is a for-profit, limited liability company organized under the
9 laws of the State of Delaware, with its principal place of business in Mountain View, California; it
10 regularly conducts business throughout California, including Santa Clara County. Plaintiffs are
11 informed and believe, and thereon allege that, at all relevant times, Defendant Google LLC has
12 acted as an agent of Defendant YouTube, LLC, and controls or participates in censoring and
13 restricting speech on the YouTube service or platform.

14 51. Defendant Alphabet Inc. is a for-profit American multinational corporation
15 conglomerate incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware, with its principal place of
16 business in Mountain View, California. According to Defendants, Alphabet Inc. was created as art
17 of a corporate restructuring of Defendants Google, YouTube, and other subsidiary or affiliate
18 entities on October 2, 2015. At that time, Alphabet Inc. became the parent company of Google and
19 other former Google subsidiary or affiliated entities, including Defendant YouTube. Defendants
20 also claim that the creation and establishment of Alphabet Inc. was prompted by the desire to make
21 Defendants' core businesses "cleaner and more accountable" while allowing greater autonomy to
22 group companies that operate in businesses other than internet services.

23 52. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate, or
24 otherwise, of Defendants Does 1 through 100, inclusive, are presently unknown to Plaintiffs, and
25 for that reason these Defendants are sued by such fictitious names. Plaintiffs are informed and
26 believe and thereon allege that each of the Doe Defendants is in some way legally responsible for
27 the violations of law, injuries, and harm caused, as alleged herein. If, and when appropriate,
28

1 Plaintiffs will seek leave of the Court to amend this Complaint when the true names and capacities
2 of said defendants are known.

3 **III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

4 53. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§
5 1331, 1337(a), and 2201. The Complaint includes Federal questions, and the amount in
6 controversy arising from the claims asserted on behalf of Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly
7 situated exceeds \$5 million, exclusive of interest and costs. Plaintiffs and all other persons
8 similarly situated also challenge the construction and constitutionality of 47 U.S.C. § 230(c)(1) and
9 (2), and seek a declaratory judgment that this statute does not immunize Defendants for overt
10 intentional and systematic racial discrimination on the YouTube platform.

11 54. Venue is proper in the Northern District of California (San Jose Division) under 28
12 U.S.C. § 1391. Defendants reside and/or transact business in the County of Santa Clara, and are
13 within the jurisdiction of this Court for purposes of service of process. Defendants' TOS require
14 that Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated file this Lawsuit in a court of competent
15 jurisdiction located within Santa Clara County.

16 **IV. FACTS COMMON TO ALL CLAIMS**

17 55. On June 2, 2020, this Court held a hearing on Defendants' Motion to Dismiss in
18 *Divino*. At the hearing, the Court asked Defendants if they were claiming immunity from liability
19 for denying access to YouTube based on the user's race. In response, Defendants' counsel
20 conceded that a case involving intentional race discrimination by an ISP may not be covered by
21 Section 230(c):

22 I THINK THERE COULD BE SOME STARK CASES WHERE A COURT MIGHT FIND
23 UNDER A PARTICULAR SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SOME ALLEGED
24 DISCRIMINATION DIDN'T TAKE THE FORM OF A PUBLISHER OF ACTUALLY
25 TARGETING PUBLISHER CONDUCT, AND, THEREFORE, DIDN'T COME WITHIN
26 (C)(1).

27 * * * *

28

1 I CAN IMAGINE SOME COURTS TAKING THE POSITION THAT A PROPERLY
2 PLEADED CLAIM OF THE SORT THAT YOU DESCRIBE AS SORT OF FACIAL
3 RACE DISCRIMINATION CLAIM MAY NOT BE GOOD FAITH UNDER (C)(2), I
4 CAN IMAGINE A COURT TAKING THAT POSITION.

5 Attached as Exhibit E is a true and correct copy of the June 2, 2020-Transcript of Oral Argument
6 before the Hon. Virginia DeMarchi; Exhibit E at 10:45 15-22.

7 56. This Lawsuit is that “stark case.” Defendants are engaged in intentional race
8 discrimination against Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, that violates Defendants’
9 contractual promises not to discriminate, and also violates long established laws that prohibit
10 racism for profit.

11 57. The central allegation in this Lawsuit is that Defendants engage in identity and
12 viewpoint-based filtering and service access restrictions that utilize and base access restrictions on
13 Plaintiffs’ race, identity, and/or viewpoints.

14 58. Defendants profile, use, and consider Plaintiffs’ race, personal identity, or
15 viewpoint, in order to interfere with, restrict, or block video viewing, promotion, advertising,
16 engagement, and/or monetization services because Plaintiffs are African American. This is
17 unlawful and cannot be immunized by Congress.

18 59. Defendants’ profiling, review, use, and consideration of Plaintiffs’ race, ethnicity,
19 religion, political affiliations or personal identity or viewpoints is prohibited not only under
20 Defendants’ TOS and other related agreements with Plaintiffs, but it also violates laws dating back
21 to the Civil War which prohibit racial discrimination in contract and business relationships.

22 **A. The Governing Agreements**

23 60. Each time that Plaintiffs (or any other member of the public) access the YouTube
24 user interface, Plaintiffs and Defendants execute binding contract(s) that govern the parties
25 respective rights and obligations on YouTube, including the TOS.

26 61. The provisions in the TOS and other agreements are part of a uniform consumer
27 contract that every one of YouTube’s 2.3 billion users must execute and agree to upon accessing
28 the website.

1 62. The TOS and other agreement(s) are governed by California law.

2 63. Under the agreement(s), Defendants designate YouTube as a “passive website,” that
3 is open to the public, provided that any person who “uses or visits” the YouTube website or “any
4 YouTube products software, data feeds, and services provided” consents and legally agrees to
5 YouTube’s “TOS,” “Google’s Privacy Policy,” and “Community Guidelines,” as “incorporated by
6 reference” and are further clarified or modified by Defendants “without notice” (collectively the
7 “Agreement”).

8 64. The contract(s) allow Defendants not only collect, store, analyze, and organize the
9 personal, financial, political, and other data for each of the YouTube Platform users, but
10 Defendants also use and sell that data to third parties on the open market.

11 65. In 2018, Defendants’ authorized representatives testified under oath to Congress and
12 confirmed that YouTube is “a neutral public forum” in which Defendants “enforce [their] policies
13 in a politically neutral way.”

14 66. Among other statements, Defendants affirmatively represent to the public and
15 YouTube users that all access rules and restrictions apply equally to all without consideration of the
16 race, personal identity, or viewpoint of the user and that YouTube is a “forum” where the public
17 can engage in “freedom of expression,” to communicate and interact with other users subject to
18 viewpoint neutral content based filtering and regulations that apply equally to all.

19 67. As of the filing date of this lawsuit, YouTube’s CEO and other senior officers of
20 Defendants continue to represent and insist to the public that YouTube’s regulation and restriction
21 of access to its services is undertaken solely by “viewpoint neutral” application of specific content
22 based rules limited to actual video content and does not use, consider, or take into account the
23 user’s race, sexual identity, political or religious association, or any other personal identity trait or
24 viewpoint of the user.

25 68. Based on Plaintiffs’ experience, and the experience of other YouTube users who are
26 members of other protected racial classifications under the law, that is a lie. And Defendants have
27 admitted as much on multiple occasions dating back to at least 2017.

28

1 **1. The General Terms Of Use And Contract-Based Promises**

2 69. As with many large public consumer businesses, Defendants contract with users
3 through the use of an online, consumer form service contract(s).

4 70. Like many other consumer service contracts, the TOS and other related
5 agreement(s) that govern the consumer's respective obligations and rights is not a beacon of clarity.
6 Specifically, Defendants utilize a myriad of confusing, ambiguous, vague, overbroad, overlapping,
7 interconnected, and inconsistent provisions to govern the parties' respective rights and obligations,
8 including integrating or incorporating service and access provisions that are not specific to the
9 YouTube platform, but apply to any service or product that Defendant Google provides or markets
10 to the public.

11 71. In or about December 2019, Defendant Google merged its general terms of service
12 for its products and services with that of YouTube's TOS for all purposes. Consequently, access
13 actions, restrictions, or blocking that occur on YouTube may also be used by Defendants to review,
14 restrict, block, or deny any service that either entity provides, including Android devices and use,
15 personal email, publisher advertising, confidential health record data storage and access, all
16 applications sold in Google's Android App store, election monitoring services, public health and
17 law enforcement services search, and any and all other communication or information services that
18 Google, YouTube, or their affiliates provide to consumers or the public.

19 72. The result is a complex and indecipherable web of service provisions that are not
20 readily available to users and require each user to locate and navigate as part of a convoluted,
21 confusing and complicated disclosure process, which may not be functionally accessible to the
22 user.

23 73. The user is also required to figure out what agreements and provisions govern what
24 conduct and restrictions, and which agreements are in place at the time to govern the specific
25 conduct.

26 74. This is virtually impossible, because as is the case here, Defendants routinely
27 change or amend the provisions of these agreements and do so unilaterally, without adequate notice
28 to users.

1 75. Because each Plaintiff executed a new TOS agreement every time they access
2 YouTube on their internet browsers, only Defendants know what versions of the agreements and
3 policies apply to the conduct at issue during the period of time governing the claims in this
4 Lawsuit.

5 76. The TOS and other agreement(s) exist as electronic, on line documents. The
6 agreements are executed electronically from drop down menus. Consequently, users often do not
7 have access to or understand the TOS or agreement(s), let alone which version of the TOS and
8 other agreement(s) may govern a particular action or conduct that occurs on a particular date.

9 77. One fundamental provision of the TOS and agreement(s), however, has not changed.
10 In every TOS or agreement during the relative period of this Lawsuit, Defendants promise users
11 equal and full access to all YouTube services, subject only to viewpoint neutral content-based rules
12 that apply equally to all.

13 78. On January 17, 2018, Defendants testified to Congress under oath that access to all
14 services offered by Defendants in connection with YouTube are available to Plaintiffs, and all
15 users, subject only to viewpoint neutral content-based rules that apply equally to all users:

16 **Senator Cruz:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Welcome to each of the witnesses. I'd like to
17 start by asking each of the company representatives a simple question, which is: do you
18 consider your companies to be neutral public fora?

19 * * * *

20 **Senator Cruz:** I'm just looking for a yes or no whether you consider yourself to be a
21 neutral public forum.

22 **Senator Cruz:** Ms. Downs?

23 **Ms. Downs:** Yes, our goal is to design products for everyone, subject to our policies and the
24 limitations they impose on the types of content that people may share on our products.

25 **Senator Cruz:** So, you're saying you do consider YouTube to be a neutral public forum?

26 **Ms. Downs: Correct.** We enforce our policies in a politically neutral way. Certain things
27 are prohibited by our Community Guidelines, which are spelled out and provided publicly
28 to all of our users.

1 * * * *

2 **Ms. Downs:** *As I mentioned, we enforce our policies in a politically neutral way.* In terms
3 of the specifics of Prager University, it's a subject of ongoing litigation so I'm not free to
4 comment on the specifics of that case.

5 See [https://www.c-span.org/video/?439849-1/facebook-twitter-youtube-officials-testify-combating-](https://www.c-span.org/video/?439849-1/facebook-twitter-youtube-officials-testify-combating-extremism)
6 [extremism](https://www.c-span.org/video/?448566-1/house-judiciary-committee-examines-social-media-filtering-practices) and [https://www.c-span.org/video/?448566-1/house-judiciary-committee-examines-](https://www.c-span.org/video/?448566-1/house-judiciary-committee-examines-social-media-filtering-practices)
7 [social-media-filtering-practices](https://www.c-span.org/video/?448566-1/house-judiciary-committee-examines-social-media-filtering-practices) at 02:34:28 – 02:35:29 of the full hearing recording (emphasis
8 added).

9 79. Before and after that date, up to the time of the filing of this lawsuit, YouTube's
10 CEO Susan Wojcicki and other senior officers of Defendants have repeatedly reaffirmed and
11 maintained that all of access decisions are based on viewpoint neutral application of the content
12 based rules governing the service that apply equally to all.

13 80. Thus, whatever ambiguity exists in their agreements with Plaintiffs, Defendants
14 admit that all of the agreements and the application of the provisions in those agreements are
15 governed by a core and fundamental promise: access to the YouTube platform and all services is
16 open and available to any member of the public who uses YouTube, subject only to viewpoint
17 neutral content based rules that apply equally to all.

18 81. That promise governs all of a user's content based rights and obligations associated
19 with YouTube and all services. It applies not only to Plaintiffs and to all public users, but also to
20 Defendants, who sponsor video content that competes directly with Plaintiffs and other public users
21 for CPMs, viewer reach and expansion, promotion and advertising, and monetization of revenue
22 generated by each video that is posted on the YouTube platform and/or is available through viewer
23 subscription services.

24 82. Defendants' core, fundamental promise of ensuring equal access to YouTube, under
25 neutral content-based rules is illusory, false, and unenforceable.

26 83. Defendants exercise "unfettered discretion" when applying YouTube's content-
27 based service rules and provisions and determining what access to give each user. Defendants
28

1 admit that at least since 2016, the exercise of this “unfettered discretion” by Defendants is not
2 viewpoint or identity neutral.

3 84. Since at least 2017, Defendants have grudgingly admitted that they “target” and
4 deny access or services to Plaintiffs based, not on the video content posted by a Plaintiff, but “for
5 any reason, or no reason,” including the race, personal identity, or personal viewpoint, of YouTube
6 content creators, viewers, and users.

7 85. The practice of using its “discretion” to deny access to any Plaintiffs, or any user,
8 based on race, identity, or viewpoint, rather than video content, violates and breaches the express
9 and implied promises set forth in YouTube’s TOS and other service or access agreements, because
10 those agreements are governed in their entirety by California law, and expressly limit the exercise
11 of Defendants’ “discretion” to that “permitted” by law.

12 86. Thus, Defendants’ admissions that they are engaged in identity and viewpoint based
13 access denials and targeting, breach the express and implied promises that discretionary access
14 decision must be viewpoint neutral in application and comply with all federal and state laws
15 prohibiting discrimination in contract, including 42 U.S.C. § 1981, the Unruh Act, and §§17200, *et*
16 *seq.* of the California Business & Professions Code.

17 2. The License Provisions

18 87. The current (and/or prior versions) of YouTube’s TOS at issue in this discrimination
19 case require Plaintiffs to “grant” Defendants a renewable, “irrevocable” and “perpetual” license to
20 any and all video content or communication that occurs on YouTube. This includes, but is not
21 limited to, the property rights for all personal data and other revenue streams that Plaintiffs hold an
22 interest in or otherwise derive from the posting, viewing, advertising, or monetization of their
23 videos on YouTube.

24 88. Under the TOS, Plaintiffs “grant” Defendants a “worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-
25 free, sublicensable and transferable license to use that Content . . . in connection with the Service
26 and YouTube’s business”

27
28

1 89. The TOS also grant other YouTube “users” a “non-exclusive, royalty-free license to
2 access” content, “reproduce, distribute, prepare derivative works, display, and perform it . . . as
3 enabled by a feature of the Service.”

4 90. This license includes the right of Defendants and other users to post and monetize
5 Plaintiffs’ “[c]ontent or other material” that makes Plaintiffs (i) “solely responsible for” the content
6 and its “consequences,” including (ii) all intellectual property rights and restrictions on the video
7 content, and (iii) not posting content or seeking access to services in a manner that is “contrary to
8 the YouTube Community Guidelines.”

9 91. In applying these provisions, Defendants reserve “the right to decide whether
10 Content violates these Terms,” including, “but not limited to, pornography, obscenity, or excessive
11 length,” and, “in so doing, remove such Content and/or terminate a user’s account” if, “in its sole
12 discretion . . . submitting such material is determined to be “in violation of these Terms.”

13 92. Defendants’ acquisition of the licensing rights to 95% of the world’s public video
14 content along with the personal and financial information data that belongs to the 2.3 billion users
15 who post or view the content is not free or a gift to the largest and most powerful tech enterprise in
16 the history of the world. Rather, the license rights are obtained through for tangible and valuable
17 consideration: the right of the licensor or user to equal access to the YouTube platform and all of its
18 services, subject to and limited only by the viewpoint neutral application of YouTube’s content-
19 based rules.

20 93. Thus, under the TOS, Defendants’ license agreement binds and requires them to
21 apply and impose access restrictions for viewpoint neutral content based violations of a third
22 party’s intellectual property rights, Defendants’ Community Guidelines, and other content based
23 terms of YouTube’s service, and to do so in a manner “permitted” by the law.

24 94. Defendants’ past, present, and continuing violations of the TOS is a fundamental
25 and material breach of the trillion dollar licensing provisions by which Defendants obtained
26 perpetual” and “irrevocable” right to use, display, and monetize 95% of the public’s video content
27 that exists or has ever existed in the world, as well as the personal and proprietary data of the 2.3
28 billion people who use or access the site.

1 **B. Defendants Are Engaged In Anti-Competitive, Unlawful, Deceptive And Unfair**
2 **Business Practices**

3 95. Defendants shuffle between three conflicting and irreconcilable roles in connection
4 with YouTube:

5 a. When Defendants put on their “ISP” hat, Defendants host, review, curate,
6 and monetize the video content of third party users who license their content, and the personal data
7 property rights of these users, in return for providing equal access to YouTube content and services,
8 subject only to viewpoint neutral rules that apply equally to all.

9 b. When Defendants put on their “creator” hat, Defendants create videos and
10 partner with hand-picked creators to sponsor their content, and both operate and act as the largest
11 and most powerful of YouTube users to compete directly and aggressively with Plaintiffs and other
12 third party users for views, reach, engagements, CPM revenue, advertisers, and a host of other user
13 based revenue streams on YouTube.

14 c. When Defendants put on their “advertiser” hat, Defendants review,
15 categorize, and classify the video content of third party users for purposes of selling advertisements
16 on the YouTube platform in connection with individual videos and/or YouTube channels, based on
17 demographic information in the form of Defendants’ metadata that they generate for individual
18 videos which is gleaned from video titles and tags (posted by Plaintiffs when the individual videos
19 are posted to the platform), Plaintiffs’ channel profiles (which were input when the channels were
20 first created), the profiles of Plaintiffs’ subscribers (which individual subscribers input when they
21 first registered with Defendants) and the subscribers’ video viewing histories (which Defendants
22 gather, analyze and summarize in the form of metadata), as well as the profiles of other users who
23 view Plaintiffs’ videos (which were input when they first registered with Defendants) and the
24 viewers’ video viewing histories (which Defendants also gather, analyze and summarize in the
25 form of metadata). Using the enormous wealth of information Defendants have about the
26 Plaintiffs, their subscribers and the viewers of their videos, Defendants can identify, price and sell
27 advertising space on the YouTube platform in connection with individual videos posted, based on
28 the demographics of the channel subscribers and video viewers. In this way, Defendants can

1 identify, market and sell advertising based on the race, identity and viewpoints of the YouTube
2 users and generate revenue for Defendants, their affiliated creators, and affluent white YouTube
3 creators, without ever reviewing any of the millions of individual videos posted on the YouTube
4 platform. In short, Defendants divvy up the video content on the platform by race, identity and
5 viewpoint in order to sell advertisements to third parties without regard to the actual content of
6 videos; moreover, Defendants fully monetize those creators whose subscribers and viewers fit the
7 “right demographic,” paying them collectively millions of dollars each month regardless of whether
8 their individual videos comply with Defendants’ own Community Guidelines and TOS.

9 96. Defendants’ multiple roles create platform wide conflicts of interest, in which
10 Defendants utilize their unfettered authority to curate third party content on YouTube as a pretext
11 to impose access and content restrictions on Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated, that
12 are not imposed on content posted or sponsored directly or derivatively by Defendants or other
13 parties with whom they contract with for sponsorship.

14 97. In the last four years, Defendants have invested in and expanded their business to
15 become the largest a production and media company in the world. *See*
16 <https://www.feedough.com/youtube-business-model-how-does-youtube-make-money/>.

17 98. Among other things, Defendants announced that “[t]he company has partnered with
18 its top content creators who wanted to charge a subscription rental or purchase fees for their content
19 and made their uploaded content as paid content which requires users to pay for a subscription or
20 purchase fees to access the content of the channel.” Furthermore, Defendants decided to partner
21 with “affiliates” whose “related product” advertisements are placed with some videos on YouTube.
22 These products link to the affiliate partners, which pay a commission to Defendants if their
23 products are purchased.

24 99. Defendants understand that the YouTube Platform has effectively surpassed its user
25 saturation point, and that monetizing and profiting from YouTube by merely hosting content on the
26 platform is no longer financially feasible to satisfy Defendants’ insatiable lust for revenue and
27 profits.

28

1 100. Thus, in addition to hosting their own video channels on YouTube, Defendants have
2 entered into lucrative preferred provider production deals with other global media companies,
3 including PBS, MSNBC, HBO, Fox News, Breitbart, and other media and entertainment
4 conglomerates.

5 101. Defendants have also entered the digital TV market with the advent of YouTube
6 TV. Defendants use their control over third party user content, on and access to the YouTube
7 platform to induce consumers to purchase their TV and entertainment services by using the
8 YouTube hosting platform, user interface to that platform, and content curation powers to induce
9 consumers to use YouTube for all digital based TV or video content, including movies, music,
10 sports, and entertainment.

11 102. Defendants compete for that public audience or viewership unfairly and unlawfully,
12 in a manner which gives their “preferred content” a competitive advantage, by among other things,
13 using their filtering tools and criteria to restrict the access and reach of the smaller third-party users
14 it hosts on YouTube. Thus, under the pretext of making the site safe for their users, Defendants
15 arbitrarily, capriciously, and deceptively restrict access and audience reach to the videos of their
16 competitors on the platform, like Plaintiffs, while at the same time allowing their own content to
17 avoid those same restrictions and restraints -- even when that content violates their own guidelines.
18 In so doing, Defendants effectively clear space on the platform for content which they, or their
19 preferred users supply, to better reach the sites’ 2.3 billion users, by censoring the content of their
20 competitors.

21 **C. Defendants’ Tool Kit For Unlawful Conduct**

22 103. Defendants utilize a series of discriminatory, anticompetitive and unlawful
23 suppression practices and conduct to grow their profits, financial, interests, and unprecedented
24 consolidation and control over information, speech, advertising, expression, and internet
25 viewership.

26 **1. Artificial Intelligence Algorithm Restrictions**

27 104. The central mechanism used by Defendants to achieve these objectives are A.I.
28 based algorithms (“A.I.”), and computer driven filtering tools that profile, regulate, restrict, flag,

1 and block creator content and access on YouTube. Defendants surreptitiously collect information
2 regarding Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated, their subscribers, and the viewers of
3 their videos, and generate metadata that is embedded, appended or associated with individual
4 videos to facilitate Defendants' unlawful discriminatory and anticompetitive filtering and review
5 tools to restrict or block the video content and access to the YouTube platform by Plaintiffs and all
6 other persons similarly situated, both as YouTube creators and as viewers.

7 105. Defendants *claim* that these algorithms are viewpoint and identity neutral, and that
8 they ensure that the "same standards apply equally to all" when it comes to the content regulation
9 of speech on YouTube. Defendants claim that their employees conduct "manual reviews" to
10 supplement the electronic filtering and regulation of video content.

11 106. But the evidence, including statements by Defendants' employees familiar with both
12 electronic and manual filtering and regulation of speech that takes place on the YouTube Platform,
13 suggests that Defendants' representations of neutral viewpoint and identity-based content
14 regulation are *also* false. The A.I. and algorithmic filtering tools are embedded with code that
15 regulates content based on purely subjective, viewpoint, topic, and identity animus, and other
16 unlawful criteria. Even before October 2016, Defendants' engineers began making changes to the
17 code and operations of the algorithms and filtering tools in order to ensure that Defendants could
18 filter videos and regulate access to video content based upon overt discrimination based on race,
19 sexual or gender orientation, ethnic, political or religious animus, as well as for financial and/or
20 anticompetitive purposes.

21 107. Similarly, Defendants' viewpoint bias, animus, and discrimination towards the
22 user's identity or viewpoint is institutionally and culturally rampant in Defendants' work place and
23 employment practices. Among other things, Defendants operate and administer "Restricted Mode"
24 through employees, including engineers and content reviewers, and independent contractors. These
25 people work in what has been widely reported and acknowledged as a dysfunctional work
26 environment and often work outside of the United States in countries and cultural settings where
27 discrimination against Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated is not only condoned but is
28 deeply embedded in social mores.

1 108. Internal emails by and between Defendants’ employees show that many employees
2 are routinely subjected to harassment, threats, blacklisting, discipline, and hazing based on their
3 race, or political or religious viewpoints. The dysfunction and viewpoint bias emanate from, and
4 are enforced at, the highest ranks of Defendants’ upper management, and drive the actions of
5 employee supervisors, co-workers, third-party affiliates, and advertisers.

6 109. Consequently, even when manual employee reviews of video content are used to
7 check and audit restrictions on videos generated from the digital algorithms or from flagging by
8 other YouTube users, Defendants apply “Restricted Mode” and other discretionary and vague
9 content based criteria, to restrict access to Plaintiffs’ videos using vague and undefined terms such
10 as “mature” or “sensitive” for certain audiences, solely because the video discusses a topic
11 involving abbreviations like “BLM,” “KKK;” terms such as “Black,” “White,” “Racism,”
12 “Boogaloo,” “White Supremacy,” “Racial Profiling,” “Police Shootings,” “Police Brutality,”
13 “Black Lives Matter;” names of individuals such as those killed by law enforcement, “Bill Cosby,”
14 “Louis Farrakhan;” names of organizations such as “Ku Klux Klan,” “Nazi,” “Neo-Nazi,” “Aryan
15 Brotherhood,” and/or other euphemisms that are known and particular to the African American
16 Community, or the video’s title or tag words includes these trigger words.

17 110. Defendants’ conduct creates censorship, restraint of speech, and discrimination
18 based on the race, identity, and/or viewpoint of Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated,
19 not based upon video content which might violate a narrow, neutral, objective, and specifically
20 verifiable criteria that furthers a compelling and legitimate public interest.

21 111. Defendants’ conduct also forces Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated to
22 self-censor and to avoid not only using abbreviations like “BLM,” “KKK;” terms such as “Black,”
23 “White,” “Racism,” “Boogaloo,” “White Supremacy,” “Racial Profiling,” “Police Shootings,”
24 “Police Brutality,” “Black Lives Matter;” names of individuals such as those killed by law
25 enforcement, “Bill Cosby,” “Louis Farrakhan;” names of organizations such as “Ku Klux Klan,”
26 “Nazi,” “Neo-Nazi,” “Aryan Brotherhood,” and/or other euphemisms that are known and particular
27 to the African American Community in video titles and tag words, but to avoid mentioning these in
28 the video content, in order to avoid having Defendants remove videos or issue a “strike” against the

1 channel, purportedly for posting “hate speech” or violating one or more of Defendants’ unidentified
2 Community Guidelines and TOS.

3 112. Defendants’ A.I. tools and practices effectively silence the voices of Plaintiffs and
4 all other persons similarly situated concerning some of the most important issues and current events
5 affecting their communities.

6 113. Because Defendants’ A.I. tools and practices single out the videos of Plaintiffs and
7 all other persons similarly situated for adverse treatment (e.g., removal, restricted access if any,
8 and/or limited or no monetization), the Plaintiffs and class members cannot generate sufficient
9 viewers or subscribers to grow their channels so as to qualify for all of the Defendants’ special
10 programs and perks, such as YouTube partnership, Channel Membership, mobile Livestreaming, or
11 SuperChat applications, resulting in the creation of a ghetto tier of YouTube creators based on their
12 race, identity and/or viewpoints, who are doomed to create videos for very limited audiences for
13 little to no money.

14 2. Excluding Channels And Videos From Full Revenue Generation

15 114. In addition to creating and using metadata to racially profile Plaintiffs and all other
16 persons similarly situated, as well as their subscribers and viewers, for purposes of restricting
17 access to the YouTube platform, Defendants use the same or similar metadata to limit the revenue
18 which can be generated from individual videos. Defendants use A.I., algorithms, and filtering tools
19 and practices in conjunction with the metadata they create, to prevent Plaintiffs and other persons
20 similarly situated from earning money from videos merely because the metadata reflects the video
21 title and/or tags include abbreviations like “BLM,” “KKK;” terms such as “Black,” “White,”
22 “Racism,” “Boogaloo,” “White Supremacy,” “Racial Profiling,” “Police Shootings,” “Police
23 Brutality,” “Black Lives Matter;” names of individuals such as those killed by law enforcement,
24 “Bill Cosby,” “Louis Farrakhan;” names of organizations such as “Ku Klux Klan,” “Nazi,” “Neo-
25 Nazi,” “Aryan Brotherhood,” and/or other euphemisms that are known and particular to the African
26 American Community. Defendants also use the same or similar metadata to limit or prevent
27 revenue generation from videos posted by Plaintiffs or other persons similarly situated, simply
28 because the videos were created by Plaintiffs or members of other races, by other similar

1 communities, or by those sharing the same viewpoints, or because the videos were posted on
2 channels that are popular with members of Plaintiffs' communities, or are widely viewed by
3 viewers who share Plaintiffs' race, identity, and/or viewpoints.

4 115. Because Defendants use metadata based on video titles and tags to flag videos for
5 limited monetization or demonetization, Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated self-censor
6 and either avoid posting videos regarding issues and current events that are important to their
7 community (e.g., videos regarding the deaths of unarmed African Americans at the hands of law
8 enforcement, healthcare providers' refusals to test or treat African Americans for the Covid-19
9 virus, the disparate infection, death and unemployment rates experienced by African Americans as
10 a result of the Covid-19 pandemic), or they misspell key words like "Black," "White," "Race,"
11 "Racist," and "Racism," or they rely on euphemisms known only to the African American
12 community.

13 116. Defendants' conduct and practices cause Plaintiffs and other persons similarly
14 situated to lose revenue which their fully compliant videos would otherwise have generated, as well
15 to lose subscribers and viewers, and the opportunity to grow their channels and to qualify for full
16 access to all of the perks that Defendants offer others.

17 3. Misapplying "Restricted Mode"

18 117. Defendants also use the same or similar metadata to restrict access to the full
19 YouTube platform and related benefits by misapplying "Restricted Mode" to the videos of
20 Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated. "Restricted Mode" is one of Defendants' primary tools
21 for platform control and curation. "Restricted Mode" affects tens of millions of YouTube users
22 every single day.

23 118. According to Alice Wu, a Senior Manager of Trust & Safety at YouTube, LLC,
24 about 1.5 percent of YouTube's daily views (or approximately 75 million of the nearly 5 billion
25 views every single day) come from people who have activated Defendants' "Restricted Mode."

26 119. According to Defendants, "Restricted Mode" is supposed to function much like a
27 curtain that blocks access to the hardcore pornography section at the corner video rental shop,
28

1 limiting viewer access by younger, sensitive audiences to video content that contains certain
2 specifically enumerated “mature” aspects.

3 120. Defendants assert that “Restricted Mode” is a tool “to help institutions like schools
4 as well as people who wanted to better control the content they see on YouTube with an option to
5 choose an intentionally limited YouTube experience.” “Restricted Mode” also can be activated by
6 system administrators to restrict all access on computer networks to all users and electronic devices
7 connected to the network, including viewers who seek to access video content in public libraries,
8 schools, and other public institutions or private workplaces.

9 121. While Defendants claim that viewers control the use of “Restricted Mode,” and can
10 choose to turn on “Restricted Mode” for their personal accounts, there is growing evidence that it
11 sweeps more broadly. In certain instances, for viewers who do not have YouTube accounts and
12 seek to view videos posted on YouTube by Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated,
13 Defendants have applied “Restricted Mode” to prevent those viewers from accessing videos
14 through links posted on other social media platforms that are not owned or controlled by
15 Defendants, as well as to prevent YouTube users who have not activated “Restricted Mode” from
16 accessing those videos.

17 122. According to Defendants, “Restricted Mode” can be applied to videos in three ways.

18 a. First, Defendants examine certain “signals” like the video’s metadata, title,
19 and tag words associated with the video. When creators post videos, Defendants invite them to
20 include certain information in the title or to input “tag” words which are purportedly designed to
21 help viewers find videos in which they are interested, such as a title reflecting the subject of the
22 video, and tag words indicating the video’s themes or content. Plaintiffs and other persons
23 similarly situated unwittingly provide Defendants with such titles and tag words along with their
24 posted videos. Defendants then generate metadata which is additional content that they insert into,
25 append to, or associate with the videos that are posted, which allows Defendants apply A.I.,
26 algorithms and other filtering tools to profile Plaintiffs, their subscribers and viewers, as well as
27 other persons similarly situated, and to sort them by race, identity and viewpoints. Defendants
28 ultimately apply “Restricted Mode” to the otherwise compliant videos posted by Plaintiffs and

1 other persons similarly situated, because the videos have titles or tag words that reflect issues of
2 importance to African American or other racial communities, and those who simply watch videos
3 popular in such communities – essentially relegating these videos to a limited audience which
4 excludes white, conservative and/or “more sensitive viewers,” simply because the videos were
5 made by or for members of protected racial classifications under the law.

6 b. Second, Defendants claim that such metadata “signals” identify videos
7 which violate Defendants’ Community Guidelines or TOS. However, these “signals” are used by
8 Defendants as a pretext to segregate disfavored content using “Restricted Mode,” regardless of
9 whether the video contains material which is unsuitable for children, younger audiences or more
10 sensitive viewers. Defendants themselves create all such metadata and insert, embed or associate
11 that metadata which reflects demographic information regarding the video creators, channel
12 subscribers and viewers, along with individual videos to create more “signals” for A.I., algorithms,
13 and filtering tools to utilize. Thus, in certain cases, videos that would otherwise pass through the
14 filtering process without incident, are flagged for restrictions by Defendants; not because of
15 anything in the video content, but because of metadata or other “signal” information that
16 Defendants themselves have inserted, embedded or associated with the video. These signals
17 include information about the race, identity and/or individual viewpoint of the video creator, her
18 subscribers, and her viewers.

19 c. Third, Defendants also purportedly use “Restricted Mode” to passively
20 restrict a video if it is “flagged” as “inappropriate” by anyone in the “community” of YouTube
21 users. According to Defendants, the so-called “flagged” videos are subsequently reviewed by a
22 “team” of human reviewers for “violations” of Community Guidelines and/or TOS. But flagged
23 videos are subject to Defendants’ own internal review procedures that are race, identity and
24 viewpoint based, so that many flagged videos posted by Plaintiffs and other persons similarly
25 situated may never receive an independent content review by a human being, much less a YouTube
26 employee.

27 123. As shown below, when a network administrator or an individual viewer activates
28 “Restricted Mode,” each video subject to “Restricted Mode” appears with Defendant’s custom

1 stamp of disapproval, including a red face including a red square bearing a foreboding facial
2 expression, together with text showing “This video is unavailable with Restricted Mode enabled.
3 To view this video, you will need to disable Restricted Mode.”

4 124. Defendants’ stamp of disapproval thus makes a specific and falsifiable
5 misrepresentation to viewers of videos posted by Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, that
6 the specific video that they have attempted to access contains content that is so inappropriate,
7 shocking and outrageous, that the viewer must be protected from that content and that the
8 YouTuber creator who has posted that content is responsible for having created and uploaded such
9 inappropriate, shocking, and outrageous content.

10 125. These specific and falsifiable factual representations are by no means limited to
11 Defendants’ “Restricted Mode” stamp of disapproval. Viewers who attempt to ascertain why a
12 particular video has been subjected to “Restricted Mode” are told by Defendants that videos are
13 eliminated from “Restricted Mode” when they include specific pieces of content, including content
14 (1) talking about drug use or abuse, or drinking alcohol in videos; (2) overly detailed conversations
15 about or depictions of sex or sexual activity; (3) graphic descriptions of violence, violent acts,
16 natural disasters and tragedies, or even violence in the news; (4) videos that cover specific details
17 about events related to terrorism, war, crime, and political conflicts that resulted in death or serious
18 injury, even if no graphic imagery is shown; (5) inappropriate language, including profanity; and
19 (6) video content that is gratuitously incendiary, inflammatory, or demeaning towards an individual
20 or group.

21 126. In reality Defendants’ definition of “Restricted Mode” is applied in a significantly
22 over inclusive and under inclusive manner, which has caused significant damage to Plaintiffs and
23 other persons similarly situated. Even the most simple examination of Plaintiffs’ videos subject to
24 “Restricted Mode” shows that Defendants are not only dead wrong in their representations to the
25 public concerning African American videos that Defendants subject to the “Restricted Mode”
26 stamp of disapproval, but Defendants are hiding from the public valuable content and are doing so
27 in bad faith.

28

1 127. To the extent that videos which have titles or tags which include “abbreviations like
2 “BLM,” “KKK;” terms such as “Black,” “White,” “Racism,” “Boogaloo,” “White Supremacy,”
3 “Racial Profiling,” “Police Shootings,” “Police Brutality,” “Black Lives Matter;” names of
4 individuals such as those killed by law enforcement, “Bill Cosby,” “Louis Farrakhan;” names of
5 organizations such as “Ku Klux Klan,” “Nazi,” “Neo-Nazi,” “Aryan Brotherhood,” and/or other
6 euphemisms that are known and particular to the African American Community,” Defendants apply
7 the “Restricted Mode” filter to these videos and limit viewer access to many compliant videos
8 posted by Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, which contain content of interest to the
9 African American community. Defendants do so, despite the fact that the videos do not contain
10 materials which discuss drug use or abuse or drinking alcohol; overly detailed conversations about
11 or depictions of sexual activity; graphic depictions of violence, violent acts; natural disasters or
12 tragedies or violence in the news; specific details about events related to terrorism, war, crime and
13 political conflicts that resulted in death or serious injury even if no graphic imagery is shown;
14 inappropriate language, including profanity, or content that is gratuitously incendiary,
15 inflammatory, or demeaning toward an individual or group.

16 128. Defendants effectively use “Restricted Mode” as a damper to quiet the voices of
17 Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, from being heard by all YouTube users and to limit
18 Plaintiffs’ reach, thereby preventing them from growing their channels, increasing subscribers and
19 viewers, generating revenue, and meeting minimum participation standards to qualify for
20 Defendants’ other benefits such as YouTube partnership, Channel Membership, Mobile Streaming
21 and SuperChat.

22 129. Once Defendants apply “Restricted Mode” to a video, Plaintiffs and other persons
23 similarly situated are then forced to spend time and effort to appeal Defendants’ decision and
24 persuade a human being to actually look at the content of the video. Even when the appeal is won,
25 Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated lose the opportunity to generate interest in and
26 revenue from the new video for a period of weeks to months, and to thereby grow their channel
27 during the period that the video is restricted. Defendants never compensate for the erroneous
28

1 application of “Restricted Mode,” regardless of the length of time it takes for Defendants to
2 actually review the restricted video content.

3 130. Defendants impose these restrictions to justify anticompetitive and unlawful actions
4 intended to gain a competitive advantage for their own video content and/or to ensure that their
5 sponsored creators, content partners, and advertisers have an unfair competitive advantage in the
6 YouTube video market. By placing no restrictions on the monetization of their own videos or those
7 of Defendants’ sponsored creators, content partners and preferred advertisers, Defendants gain a
8 competitive advantage by restricting the financial reach of Plaintiffs and other disfavored users,
9 while simultaneously ensuring that their own video content (and those of their sponsored creators,
10 content partners and preferred advertisers) are not subjected to the same (or any) Advertising
11 Restrictions.

12 131. Defendants also impose these restrictions to facilitate their advertising practices,
13 whereby they profile videos by the race, identity and viewpoint of creators, subscribers and viewers
14 so as to identify the videos with the most valuable demographics which command the highest
15 prices from most advertisers, without regard to whether there are any advertisers which are willing
16 to purchase spots associated with videos posted by Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated.

17 132. Defendants’ actual practices unlawfully provide Defendants with monopoly power
18 over the video posting and viewership market, the video advertising market, and the ability to
19 manipulate, bully, and falsely denigrate legitimate YouTube users, like Plaintiffs and other persons
20 similarly situated, by subjectively designating their speech as “inappropriate,” because Defendants
21 do not like or agree with the speakers’ race, identity or point of view; or because Defendants are
22 too cheap to actually review the videos posted to the platform, and desire to rely on inexpensive
23 A.I., algorithms, and other filtering tools for purposes of selling advertisements and curating videos
24 on YouTube.

25 4. Shadow Banning Channels And Videos

26 133. Defendants treat videos that present or discuss serious issues and current events that
27 are important to the communities of the Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated as “not
28 family friendly,” and as if they are inappropriate for all audiences simply because they were

1 uploaded by creators whose races, identities, and/or viewpoints are disfavored by Defendants.
2 Defendants are not merely removing, restricting access to or limiting monetization for videos
3 posted by Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated, Defendants are making those videos,
4 and some channels invisible on the YouTube Platform, despite the fact that the videos comply with
5 all of Defendants' Community Guidelines and TOS.

6 134. In shadow banning videos, Defendants effectively prevent Plaintiffs' subscribers
7 and potential viewers from locating new videos which discuss issues and current events that are
8 followed by the African American community; by excluding such videos from the YouTube search
9 function on the platform, Defendants are preventing creators like Plaintiffs and all other persons
10 similarly situated from growing their channels by securing the necessary subscriber and viewer
11 numbers required to qualify for Defendants' special programs and perks, such as YouTube
12 partnership, channel membership, mobile Livestreaming, or SuperChat applications, and are
13 preventing them from generating revenue from their videos.

14 135. Defendants also shadow ban entire channels belonging to Plaintiffs and other
15 similarly situated persons, by making the channels unsearchable on the platform. Without a link to
16 Plaintiffs' channels, subscribers and viewers cannot access Plaintiffs' videos. As a result of
17 shadow banning of channels, many Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated can only attract
18 new subscribers or viewers by "word of mouth," and referrals from other members of their
19 community, or from other social media platforms where links to Plaintiffs' YouTube channels are
20 posted.

21 136. Defendants' shadow bans not only impair the growth of channels belonging to, and
22 revenue generated from videos posted by Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated,
23 Defendants' conduct both effectively reduces the audience for videos posted by Plaintiffs and
24 muffles their voices across the platform, making it impossible for new YouTube viewers to locate
25 video content that is important to their specific communities. As a result, Plaintiffs, as African
26 American creators, and other persons similarly situated, cannot expand subscriber and viewer
27 numbers sufficient to grow their channels and fully enjoy full access to the YouTube platform and
28 all of the benefits Defendants offer others.

1 **5. Delegating Content Review And Regulation To Racists And White**
2 **Supremacists**

3 137. Defendants have configured the YouTube platform to allow any user to “report” or
4 “flag” videos which they believe violate the Google/YouTube Community Guidelines or TOS, e.g.,
5 video content which contains hate speech, nudity, profanity, graphic depictions of sexuality or
6 violence, disparaging remarks, content which violates existing copyrights or trademarks held by
7 persons other than the creator posting the video, or descriptions of violent events and scenes which
8 may disturb younger or more sensitive viewers. Defendants not only allow users to “report” or
9 “flag” videos posted by Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, Defendants take action
10 based on those third-party reports and flags and proceed to remove, restrict, and/or demonetize
11 individual videos; issue community “strikes;” and to suspend, and/or remove whole channels of
12 Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated. Defendants do so without first verifying that the
13 flagged video violates a specific Community Guideline or Term of Service. In effect, Defendants
14 deputize YouTube users, including racists, sexists, white supremacists, Neo-Nazis, and other hate
15 speech trolls. These delegated and affiliated users, exercise censorship powers on YouTube,
16 including reporting, flagging, bullying and threatening creators whenever Plaintiffs and other
17 persons similarly situated post content with which Defendants’ racist agents disagree.

18 138. In allowing third parties to wield the power to report or flag a video as violating the
19 applicable Community Guidelines and TOS, Defendants have deprived Plaintiffs and other persons
20 similarly situated, of equal access to the YouTube platform and all of the services Defendants make
21 available to others by creating the presumption that any flagged video does in fact contain content
22 which violates the Community Guidelines and/or TOS. After being flagged by a third party,
23 Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated are forced to spend substantial time and effort to
24 appeal the flag in order to restore the channel/video, remove the restriction, or obtain full
25 monetization for channel/video, which, but for the flag, would have reached a wide audience and
26 would have generated substantial revenue.

27 139. Because of Defendants’ conduct and practices, trolls regularly appear on the
28 channels of Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, threaten to shut down the channels – and

1 within a few days, the trolls succeed in getting Defendants to suspend the channels. As a result,
2 Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated engage in self-censorship and avoid posting videos
3 that address issues of historical, political, cultural, and educational significance to their
4 communities. Recently, Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated have avoided timely topics
5 such as the denial of Covid-19 testing and treatment to African American healthcare workers, the
6 inability of African American businesses to apply for CARE loans, and the disparate enforcement
7 of stay at home orders against African American communities. Defendants' conduct therefore
8 encourages and enables the agendas of racists, white supremacists, and Neo-Nazis on YouTube, by
9 silencing the voices of Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated.

10 **6. Interfering With Livestream Broadcasts**

11 140. Livestream broadcasts are videos that are posted in a streaming live format which
12 are controlled exclusively by creators or by the moderators designated and authorized by individual
13 creators to review, edit, and remove viewer comments which appear as the video progresses over
14 time. Livestream broadcasts allow real time viewer participation in discussions on YouTube
15 channels and often involve hundreds of people all making comments regarding important issues,
16 current events, or topics. YouTube's Livestream broadcast application allows the video creator and
17 her designated moderators to control the content of the broadcast. They control the viewer
18 participation in the comments section of the screen while the Livestream is played.

19 141. Because Defendants routinely restrict viewer access to and revenue generation from
20 videos posted by Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, depressing subscriber and viewer
21 numbers, many African American channels do not generate significant income from advertising or
22 Channel Membership. They must rely on other applications to generate revenue, such as
23 Defendants' SuperChat, Livestream Donations or Patreon Donations. As a result, Livestream
24 broadcasts have become a primary revenue generator.

25 142. Defendants regularly interfere with the Livestream broadcasts by Plaintiffs and all
26 persons similarly situated, either using employees or independent contractors which Defendants
27 hire. Defendants' Livestream interference includes such tactics as: (a) stopping Livestream
28 broadcasts, and forcing the creator to restart the broadcast, at the loss of viewers and to the

1 irritation of subscribers; (b) throttling (intentionally slowing) broadcasting speeds during
2 Livestream which distorts the oral discussion and disrupts viewer comments on the screen; (c)
3 inserting new voice content and/or visual images into the video which are entirely unrelated to the
4 decisions and choices of the channel creator and her chosen moderators, often such new voice
5 overs and images are unrelated to the Livestream topic, and are offensive, misogynistic, racist, or
6 obscene; (d) removing positive comments from viewers; and (e) disconnecting individual viewers
7 who are in the process of leaving positive comments, thereby silencing viewers who would
8 otherwise support the video or make monetary donations on the Livestream broadcast.

9 143. For the past two years, until stay at home orders for nonessential businesses were
10 imposed in the Bay Area in March of this year, Defendants' Livestream broadcast interference was
11 relentless, causing Plaintiffs either to suspend Livestream broadcasts, to self-censor and refrain
12 from discussing issues or current events of interest to the African American community, or to
13 conduct them at odd hours without prior announcements. Defendants' conduct in interfering with
14 Livestream broadcasts has reduced subscriber and viewer numbers for the channels of Plaintiffs
15 and other persons similarly situated, has reduced revenue generated from Livestream broadcasts
16 and from the channels overall, and has prevented the African American community from receiving
17 information about and discussing issues and current events which are important to members of that
18 community.

19 144. Notably, for the weeks while stay at home orders were in place for the Bay Area,
20 Plaintiffs were able to conduct Livestream broadcasts unmolested. However, Defendants'
21 interference has recommenced with the lifting of stay at home orders. Defendants' interference is
22 now ongoing.

23 7. **Excluding Videos From "Trending" And "Up Next" Video** 24 **Recommendations**

25 145. Defendants routinely exclude videos posted by Plaintiffs and all persons similarly
26 situated from YouTube's "Trending" and "Up Next" Recommendations which appear on users'
27 screens when they watch videos on YouTube. While Defendants exclude the videos of Plaintiffs
28 and other persons similarly situated, they include in the "Trending" and "Up Next" applications

1 both reaction videos which copy, pirate, or parody the videos of Plaintiffs, and videos which violate
2 Defendants' Community Guidelines and/or TOS in so far as the videos contain hate speech,
3 obscene, misogynistic, violent, threatening, or disparaging content which is directed specifically at
4 Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated. Defendants have continued to include these videos
5 posted by third parties over the repeated flags, written objections, and complaints by Plaintiffs and
6 their subscribers, and they have fully monetized many such videos despite having received flags,
7 objections and complaints that the videos violate Defendants' Community Guidelines and TOS.

8 **8. Freezing Channel Analytics Re Subscribers And Viewers**

9 146. Defendants have stopped reporting accurate current data on the "Analytics" pages
10 for the channels of Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated. For the past two years, many of
11 the Plaintiffs' "Analytics" have remained the same or have varied by very small increments with
12 respect to the number of subscribers, viewers, and view time. This has been the case regardless of
13 the number of videos posted or the number of Livestream events broadcast on the channel.

14 147. As with the Defendants' interference with Livestream broadcasts, during the period
15 of time that stay at home orders were in effect in the Bay Area in the Spring of 2020, new and
16 larger numbers have been appearing on the "Analytics" pages for some of the channels of Plaintiffs
17 and other persons similarly situated. Whether the "Analytics" pages will continue to be updated
18 after the lifting of stay at home orders remains to be seen.

19 148. Because Defendants stopped reporting accurate data regarding the number of
20 subscribers, viewers and view time for the channels of Plaintiffs and other persons similarly
21 situated, Plaintiffs have been unable to grow their channels, to demonstrate that they qualify for
22 Defendants' additional benefits and perks such as monetization, Channel Membership, Mobile
23 Access, or SuperChat. Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated have also lost revenue as they
24 are unable to prove to Defendants the number of viewers for their videos which have at least
25 limited monetization.

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1 **9. Promoting And Profiting From Hate Speech**

2 149. Defendants regularly promote and monetize hate speech targeting Plaintiffs and all
3 persons similarly situated on the YouTube platform in direct violation of Defendants' Community
4 Guidelines and TOS, and ignore repeated flags, reports and complaints regarding those videos.

5 150. Many hate speech videos targeting the African American community on YouTube
6 include identifying information regarding Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, including
7 without limitation their telephone numbers, residential addresses, registered trademarks, original
8 copyrighted material, or personal likenesses, in direct violation of Defendants' Community
9 Guidelines and TOS. Plaintiffs and other persons similarly targeted on the YouTube platform have
10 followed Defendants' published procedures to remove the hate speech, including flagging the
11 videos, reporting the violations of Defendants' Community Guidelines and Terms of Use by email,
12 and sending follow up emails complaining of both the videos and the channels on which the videos
13 are posted. The subscribers of Plaintiffs have reported that they too have flagged, reported and
14 written follow up emails to Defendants complaining of the hate speech videos and their related
15 channels.

16 151. Despite having received repeated, multiple flags, reports and written complaints
17 over a period of months concerning specific hate speech videos posted by Defendants' favored
18 partners, Defendants have refused to do anything to enforce their own published Community
19 Guidelines and TOS and have not removed the videos or suspended the channels posting such
20 videos. To this day, many hate speech videos remain posted without restriction, and fully
21 monetized to generate revenue for their creators, despite having content that is patently false, racist,
22 and/or sexist, violent, abusive or obscene. Some of the hate speech videos include threats of bodily
23 harm or death specifically directed at the Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated. Some hate
24 speech videos are posted in a way that falsely indicates that it was posted by Plaintiffs.

25 152. Among the many YouTube channels which Defendants insulate for enforcement of
26 Community Guidelines and TOS, the channels of Tommy Sotomayor and Candace Owens
27 particularly stand out for their hateful, racist, and misogynist video content. Tommy Sotomayor
28 regularly posts videos which promote violence against members of the African American

1 community. Candace Owens regularly posts videos disparaging male members of the African
2 American community. Though Plaintiffs, their subscribers and other persons similarly situated
3 repeated flagged, reported and complained about these two channels and their posted videos, as
4 wells as their trolls who engage in abusive, bullying conduct directed to YouTube users who
5 mention Sotomayor or Owens, Defendants nonetheless regularly include videos posted by
6 Sotomayor and by Owens in the “Trending,” and “Up Next” recommendation applications on the
7 screens of African American viewers. Defendants have rendered “flag proof” the channels of
8 Sotomayor and Owens, and videos posted there.

9 153. Defendants’ refusal to enforce their own Community Guidelines and TOS equally to
10 all YouTube users to eliminate hate speech videos; Defendants’ continued promotion of hate
11 speech videos by including them in the “Trending,” and “Up Next” applications; and Defendants’
12 continued monetization of hate speech videos and profiting from the sale of advertisements in
13 connection with such videos have substantially reduced racial diversity on the YouTube platform
14 and have endangered YouTube users like Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated.
15 Defendants’ conduct has stifled the voices of Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, who
16 are unable to reach their intended audiences or to post videos which address or discuss issues and
17 current events of concern to the African American community because while Plaintiffs’ compliant
18 videos are wrongly removed, restricted and demonetized as “hate speech,” Defendants protect,
19 promote and profit from vile, vicious, hate speech, and personal attacks on Plaintiffs and other
20 persons similarly situated. Plaintiffs have received harassing telephone calls and written
21 communications, forcing them to change their telephone numbers and to move from their homes.
22 They have also lost subscribers, viewers and revenue as a result of Defendants’ failure and refusal
23 to enforce their own Community Guidelines and TOS equally on all YouTube users.

24 **10. Interfering With, Obstructing, Ignoring And Delaying Appeals**

25 154. Following Defendants’ actions to limit monetization or demonetize a video, or to
26 remove or restrict a video, or to issue a strike against or to suspend a channel, Plaintiffs and other
27 persons similarly situated are forced to spend time and effort to appeal Defendants’ decision and to
28 persuade a human being to actually look at the otherwise compliant video(s) in question. Often,

1 appeals by Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated drag on for months before Defendants
2 respond to the appeal, but Defendants often do not even respond to Plaintiffs' appeals and either
3 ignore them entirely or confirm the action out of hand, without having a human being review the
4 video content that was the basis for Defendants' actions. In reality, Plaintiffs and other persons
5 similarly situated often have no real appeal at all.

6 155. On those rare events when an appeal filed by Plaintiffs or other persons similarly
7 situated are successful, after a human being actually review the video content in question and
8 concludes that Defendants' action was wrongly imposed, Defendants do not reimburse the creator
9 for lost revenue from the video(s) or the channel during the appeal process. Defendants therefore
10 have a perverse incentive built in their platform regulation, filtering and curation process: by
11 automating the application of "Restricted Mode," the monetization limitation process, and
12 authorizing members of the YouTube community to flag videos and channels following, which
13 Defendants automatically rely and act on those flags without first verifying videos/channels are in
14 violation of Community Guidelines or TOS, Defendants don't have to pay the affected creators for
15 the use of their video content, and can withhold payment unless and until a success appeal occurs.
16 At each step of the appeal process, Defendants continue to withhold payment of revenue generated
17 by the affected videos, profiting from their own improper decisions. Defendants absolutely control
18 the process: they can ignore an appeal, delay the process by weeks, months or even years, or
19 simply confirm the adverse action without ever examining the offending video content – there is no
20 oversight, no higher authority, no way to force Defendants to follow their own Community
21 Guidelines or TOS.

22 156. Defendants' conduct in interfering with, obstructing, ignoring and/or delaying
23 appeals has deprived Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated of the use of hundreds of their own
24 videos which Defendants have wrongly removed from the YouTube platform or placed in archives
25 where they cannot be viewed by anyone, have deprived Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated
26 of subscriber and viewer numbers generated from their channels which Defendants have wrongly
27 suspended or removed from the YouTube platform, and have deprived Plaintiffs and all persons
28 similarly situated of the full financial benefits from all of their otherwise compliant videos which

1 Defendants have improperly removed, restricted or demonetized for any period of time.
2 Defendants operate the YouTube platform like a Las Vegas casino, ensuring that “the house always
3 wins,” no matter how much time, effort, or value Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated
4 contribute to the platform because in the end, Defendants pick the winners based on race and other
5 immutable identity traits, and viewpoints; Defendants write and rewrite the Community Guidelines
6 and TOS; Defendants determine which users are exempt from those Community Guidelines and
7 TOS; and Defendants define the appeal process to be whatever they want for any given YouTube
8 user.

9 **D. Defendants Have Violated And Continue To Violate The Rights Of Plaintiffs**
10 **And The Class**

11 **1. Kimberly Carleste Newman**

12 157. Plaintiff Newman has been a registered YouTube user since 2015, creating and
13 posting approximately 1,654 videos on her “The True Royal Family” YouTube channel; and since
14 2016, creating and posting 209 videos on her “True Royal” YouTube channel. Plaintiff Newman is
15 an African American woman who identifies as such.

16 158. Plaintiff Newman makes and posts videos that discuss and present information
17 regarding issues and current events which are important to the African American community, from
18 a Black perspective. While her videos are pro-Black, they are not intended solely to inform and
19 entertain the African American Community; they are suitable for members of other communities
20 who are sympathetic to or curious about issues and current events as perceived from a Black
21 perspective. “The True Royal Family” channel has generated approximately 1 million views
22 annually. The “True Royal” channel has generated approximately 200,000 views annually.
23 Notwithstanding the substantial annual viewer numbers generated by her channels, Plaintiff
24 Newman has only generated total revenues of \$2,672.68 for videos posted on “The True Royal
25 Family,” and \$123.96 for videos posted on the “True Royal” channel.

26 159. Plaintiff Newman is informed and believes that Defendants have gathered extensive
27 information in order to generate metadata and then insert, embed, append, or associate such
28 metadata with the videos posted to “The True Royal Family,” and “True Royal.” Defendants

1 gathered information regarding her race (Defendants know that Plaintiff Newman is an African
2 American woman); that she makes and posts videos which have as a subject, relate to or discuss
3 issues and current events that are important to members of the African American community; her
4 subscribers either self-identify as members of the African American community or watch many
5 videos posted by other creators who have self-identified as members of the African American
6 community; and many of those who view her videos either self-identify as members of the African
7 American community or watch videos posted by other creators who have self-identified as
8 members of the African American community.

9 160. Plaintiff Newman is informed and believes that Defendants have applied “Restricted
10 Mode” and have limited monetization for videos she posted to “The True Royal Family” and “True
11 Royal” because Defendants have a policy and practice of using A.I., algorithms, and other filtering
12 tools to classify, curate, censor, and sell advertisements for YouTube videos based on metadata
13 Defendants create from information regarding the race, identity and viewpoint of creators,
14 subscribers and viewers, rather than the content of the videos posted to the YouTube platform.

15 161. Defendants have applied “Restricted Mode” and have limited monetization to nearly
16 all of the videos which remain visible to viewers on “The True Royal Family,” and nearly all of the
17 videos posted to “True Royal,” despite the fact that each of the videos fully complies with all of
18 Defendants’ Community Guidelines and TOS, and contain no nudity, sexualized scenes or
19 language, graphic depictions of sex or violence, drug abuse, or alcohol consumption. Defendants
20 have applied “Restricted Mode” to most of the videos posted, and have allowed only very limited
21 monetization for some videos, without any explanation or rationale for doing so. Plaintiff Newman
22 is informed and believes that the sole reason that Defendants have acted in this fashion is that
23 Defendants discriminate against Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated based on race, e.g.,
24 the videos were created by an African American; the videos relate to issues and events of concern
25 to the African American community, and the videos are viewed by large numbers of members of
26 the African American community.

27 162. For various periods, off and on, throughout the past five years, Defendants have
28 shadow banned both individual videos posted by Plaintiff Newman, and her channels, “The True

1 Royal Family,” and “True Royal.” Viewers have informed Plaintiff Newman that they were unable
2 to locate individual videos using YouTube search applications and terms such as “Kimberly
3 Santana,” “The True Royal Family,” “True Royal,” or using as search terms the names of
4 individual videos posted by Plaintiff Newman. Viewers have further informed Plaintiff Newman
5 that when they searched for “African American” video content, YouTube search applications
6 produced videos posted by Tommy Sotomayor consisting of hate speech and content which
7 disparages members of the African American Community.

8 163. Defendants do not provide any receipt or record of any kind when YouTubers
9 “flag,” report, or complain about videos posted by other YouTube creators. Because of
10 Defendants’ practices regarding such YouTube users’ efforts to obtain redress for violations of
11 their rights, individual creators like Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated are not able to
12 prove that they, in fact, flagged any individual video or channel. For those users whom Defendants
13 disfavor, the videos and channels are not automatically removed, restricted or demonetized, and the
14 injured YouTube user cannot prove that she flagged the noncompliant or infringing video or
15 channel. Rather, disfavored users like Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated are left to
16 make repeated written reports and complaints regarding the noncompliant or infringing video or
17 channel, often, to no effect whatsoever. Defendants merely ignore those written reports and
18 complaints too.

19 164. Plaintiff Newman registered “The True Royal Family” name and an associated
20 image as trademarks. As part of the channel creation process, Defendants ask YouTube creators if
21 they are using marks which have been registered as a trademark. When she created “The True
22 Royal Family” channel, Plaintiff Newman informed Defendants that she had registered her channel
23 name and a specific image used with thumbnail tiles as trademarks. Nonetheless, Defendants
24 refused to remove videos using Plaintiff Newman’s registered trademark image from the channels
25 of other YouTube creators in response to Plaintiff’s repeatedly flagging such videos, reporting the
26 trademark infringement for the mark by the channel, and repeated unauthorized uses of “The True
27 Royal Family” name. For a period of years, Defendants have ignored Plaintiff Newman’s
28

1 complaints and allowed other YouTube users to infringe on her trademarks with impunity, in
2 violation of Defendants' own Community Guidelines and TOS.

3 165. While Defendants refuse to protect the intellectual property of Plaintiffs and other
4 persons similarly situated, Defendants routinely flag or remove videos, and suspend channels for
5 violating the intellectual property of others. Defendants flagged a video posted by Plaintiff
6 Newman in which she personally sings acapella a song written by Stevie Wonder on grounds that
7 she was infringing the copyright for the song. Plaintiff's channel was suspended for two weeks for
8 the purported infringement.

9 166. In September 2019, a third party hacked "The True Royal Family" channel and
10 removed over 600 of Plaintiff Newman's videos so that neither the public nor Plaintiff Newman
11 could view, access, or download any of the videos or portions thereof. Plaintiff Newman promptly
12 applied to Defendants, asking that they restore the videos to "The True Royal Family" channel.
13 Defendants agreed to return the videos, but has not done so.

14 167. Months later, in 2020, rather than restoring the original 600+ videos, Defendants
15 removed another group of videos from the channel totaling more than 100 individual videos.
16 Plaintiff Newman again appealed to Defendants to restore or return all of the 700+ missing videos
17 removed from "The True Royal Family," but Defendants have failed and refused to do so without
18 any explanation as to why the original 600+ videos have not been restored, why the additional
19 100+ videos were removed, or why they have not been restored or returned.

20 168. Plaintiff Newman has been deprived of subscribers, viewers and revenue from the
21 700+ missing videos for more than nine months, and Defendants have done nothing to address her
22 ongoing injury or lost revenue.

23 169. Defendants have used A.I., algorithms, and filtering tools to restrict the reach of her
24 videos and to prevent her from increasing subscriber and viewer numbers to grow her channels and
25 generate revenue. For the past several years, the analytics page reflecting subscriber and viewer
26 numbers for "The True Royal Family" channel have remained steady, varying little from month to
27 month regardless of the number of new videos posted or the Livestream broadcasts. To avoid the
28 impact of Defendant' A.I., algorithms and filtering tools on Defendants' metadata generated from

1 video titles and tags, Plaintiff Newman intentionally self-censors: (a) she avoids using
2 controversial video titles; (b) she avoids using abbreviations like “BLM,” “KKK;” terms such as
3 “Black,” “White,” “Racism,” “Boogaloo,” “White Supremacy,” “Racial Profiling,” “Police
4 Shootings,” “Police Brutality,” “Black Lives Matter;” names, such as those of individuals such as
5 those killed by law enforcement, “Bill Cosby,” “Louis Farrakhan;” names of organizations such as
6 “Ku Klux Klan,” “Nazi,” “Neo-Nazi,” “Aryan Brotherhood,” and euphemisms that are known and
7 particular to the African American Community; she intentionally misspells terms such as “Black,”
8 “White,” “Race,” “Racism,” and “Racial Profiling,” because Defendants routinely flags such terms.

9 170. Despite her efforts to self-censor and avoid the reach of Defendants’ A.I.,
10 algorithms, and filtering tools, most of the videos posted on “The True Royal Family” and “True
11 Royal” have only limited monetization, if any, and produce next to no revenue.

12 171. Plaintiff Newman has increasingly turned to Livestream broadcasts to generate
13 revenue from her video content. Viewers can make monetary donations to YouTube creators like
14 Plaintiffs using SuperChat during Livestream broadcasts. However, for the past two years,
15 Defendants have been interfering with Livestream broadcasts on “The True Royal Family.”
16 Subscribers to “The True Royal Family” have informed Plaintiff Newman that their favorable
17 comments have been interrupted or removed, they have been booted off of the Livestream or
18 prevented from posting comments, and they have been prevented from making donations during
19 Livestream broadcasts. The subscribers’ experiences, as related to Plaintiff Newman, involve
20 conduct which is the exclusive province of the channel owner or their designated moderator(s).
21 Plaintiff Newman had not designated any moderator for the Livestream broadcasts which were the
22 subjects of subscriber complaints. Defendants also have been throttling, interrupting and even
23 cutting off Livestream video broadcasts in the middle of the event. Additionally, Defendants have
24 been inserting voice and visual content which blocks out that which Plaintiff Newman is posting
25 live.

26 172. Defendants’ conduct during “The True Royal Family” Livestream broadcasts have
27 reduced subscriber participation and interest in such events, have reduced new viewer participation,
28

1 and have reduced the number and size of viewer donations to “The True Royal Family” channel
2 depriving Plaintiff Newman of new subscribers and revenue.

3 173. Plaintiff Newman has also experienced significant and extended bullying,
4 harassment, disparaging remarks and threats of physical violence on YouTube, both in the form of
5 trolls leaving comments on “The True Royal Family” channel, and in the form of abusive and
6 threatening videos posted by other YouTube creators. Videos bearing Plaintiff Newman’s name, and
7 containing profanity and obscene content have been posted on the YouTube platform. A video
8 threatening to kill her was also posted on the platform. Such videos violate Defendants’ Community
9 Guidelines and TOS, and should be removed as such. However, Defendants’ A.I., algorithm, and
10 other filtering tools not only failed to identify these violations of the applicable rules, Defendants
11 failed and refused to respond to efforts by Plaintiff and her subscribers to flag the videos, or to
12 written reports and complaints regarding the disparaging and threatening videos, much less to
13 enforce Defendants’ own public standards and remove the videos or suspend the channels
14 responsible for posting the videos.

15 174. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants’ racial discrimination and wrongful
16 conduct, “The True Royal Family” and “True Royal” have not substantially increased their
17 respective subscriber and viewer numbers in recent years. Plaintiff Newman has suffered, and
18 continues to suffer from the loss of 700+ individual videos, improper application of Defendants’
19 A.I., algorithms, and other filtering tools resulting in the shadow banning of her videos and her
20 channels, the misapplication of “Restricted Mode,” the improper limitations on monetization for
21 most of her videos, violations of her intellectual property rights and personal disparagement and
22 threats to her person. Defendants’ conduct is willful, intentional and unlawful in discriminating
23 against Plaintiff based on her race, identity and viewpoints, and those of her subscribers and
24 viewers in limiting access to the YouTube platform, related benefits, and opportunities to generate
25 revenue.

26 2. Lisa Cabrera

27 175. Plaintiff Cabrera has been a registered YouTube creator since 2015 when she
28 created the “Lisa Cabrera” channel. Plaintiff Cabrera registered “Lisa Cabrera” as a trademark in

1 connection with her YouTube channel. 4,423 individual videos have been posted to the “Lisa
2 Cabrera” channel, 68 of those videos were archived by Defendants. The “Lisa Cabrera” videos
3 have generated more than 20 million views, with 830,000 views in just the past 28 days.

4 176. Plaintiff Cabrera is a YouTube partner. She creates and posts videos about current
5 events and news on her channels, displaying pictures and news clips in her videos with original
6 voice over commentary and narration accompanying the visual images. Despite the substantial
7 number of total and monthly views generated by the “Lisa Cabrera” channel, it has only generated
8 revenue totaling \$25,500 over the past four years.

9 177. Plaintiff Cabrera is informed and believes that Defendants have gathered extensive
10 information in order to generate metadata and then insert, embed, append, or associate such
11 metadata with the videos posted to “Lisa Cabrera,” and “Lisa C.” Defendants gathered information
12 regarding her race (Defendants know that Plaintiff Cabrera is an African American woman); that
13 she makes and posts videos which have as a subject, relate to or discuss news and current events
14 that are important to members of the African American community; her subscribers either self-
15 identify as members of the African American community or watch many videos posted by other
16 creators who have self-identified as members of the African American community; and many of
17 those who view her videos either self-identify as members of the African American community or
18 watch videos posted by other creators who have self-identified as members of the African
19 American community.

20 178. Plaintiff Cabrera is informed and believes that Defendants have applied “Restricted
21 Mode” and have limited monetization for videos she posted to “Lisa Cabrera” and “Lisa C”
22 because Defendants have a policy and practice of using A.I., algorithms, and other filtering tools to
23 classify, curate, censor, and sell advertisements for YouTube videos based on metadata Defendants
24 create from information regarding the race, identity and viewpoint of creators, subscribers and
25 viewers, rather than the content of the videos posted to the YouTube platform.

26 179. Defendants have applied “Restricted Mode” and have limited monetization to most
27 of the videos on “Lisa Cabrera,” despite the fact that each of the videos fully complies with all of
28 Defendants’ Community Guidelines and TOS, and contains no nudity, sexualized scenes or

1 language, graphic depictions of sex or violence, drug abuse, or alcohol consumption. Defendants
2 have applied “Restricted Mode” to most of the videos posted, and have allowed only very limited
3 monetization for some videos, without any explanation or rationale for doing so. Plaintiff Cabrera
4 is informed and believes that the sole reason that Defendants have acted in this fashion is that
5 Defendants discriminate against Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated based on race, e.g.,
6 Defendants restrict and demonetize the videos because they were created by an African American;
7 they relate to issues and events of concern to the African American community, and they are
8 viewed by large numbers of members of the African American community.

9 180. In addition to the Defendants’ efforts to reduced Plaintiff Cabrera’s reach by
10 misapplication of “Restricted Mode,” for various periods, off and on, throughout the past five
11 years, Defendants have shadow banned both individual videos posted by Plaintiff Cabrera, and her
12 channels, “Lisa Cabrera,” and “Lisa C” in their entirety. Viewers have informed Plaintiff that they
13 were unable to locate individual videos using YouTube search applications and terms such as “Lisa
14 Cabrera,” “Lisa C,” or using as search terms the names of individual videos posted by Plaintiff
15 Cabrera.

16 181. Because Defendants single out Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated for
17 rigorous enforcement of Defendants’ Community Guidelines and TOS, to avoid receiving a
18 “strike” for copyright infringement and related channel suspension, Plaintiff Cabrera is careful
19 about complying with ‘fair use’ rules when using clips from someone else’s videos: she keeps
20 news clips short, averaging 1-4 minutes in length; she does not alter the original material in any
21 way; she always gives full credit in the video to the source of the original material of others.

22 182. Sometimes, Plaintiff Cabrera posts identical videos both on the “Lisa Cabrera”
23 channel and the “Lisa C” back up channel to see if they generate similar viewer numbers and are
24 treated the same by Defendants’ A.I., algorithms and other filtering tools. Sometimes, the identical
25 videos posted on the “Lisa C” channel generate more viewers and revenue than those posted on the
26 “Lisa Cabrera” channel. On six different occasions, Defendants flagged the “Lisa C” channel for
27 posting “100% of the video of another YouTube creator, despite the fact that the video was created
28 by Plaintiff Cabrera, registered owner of both channels, and despite Plaintiff Cabrera’s written

1 communications to Plaintiffs notifying them that she had given permission to “Lisa C” to repost
2 each of the videos. Ultimately, Plaintiff was forced to archive each of the six videos that
3 Defendants had flagged on the “Lisa C” channel simply because Defendants claimed that she was
4 violating her own copyright on her own channel.

5 183. Defendants removed 68 of Plaintiff Cabrera’s videos without notice, explanation or
6 justification other than the videos involved copyright infringements. Though she promptly
7 appealed each removal, she was unable to have Defendants resolve the removal of the videos.
8 Defendants permanently archived those 68 videos. Now they cannot be viewed, accessed or copied
9 by anyone. They are simply “lost” to Plaintiff Cabrera. Defendants never informed Plaintiff
10 whether someone had flagged any of these videos; who, if anyone, asserted a copyright interest in
11 any content of any individual video; what, if anything, in the video triggered the Defendants’
12 conduct. Without such information, Plaintiff Cabrera could neither understand the Defendants’
13 strike against any one video or attempt to resolve the strike for any video.

14 184. Defendants wrongly suspended the “Lisa Cabrera” channel for “hate speech in
15 connection with a video Plaintiff posted commenting on a report by NBC regarding the purchase of
16 illicit narcotics on the dark web. Plaintiff Cabrera promptly appealed the suspension. Defendants
17 rejected the appeal and refused to actually watch the video. It was only after Plaintiff Cabrera filed
18 a case against Defendants in small claims court that Defendants finally contacted Plaintiff Cabrera
19 and informed her that the suspension was erroneous. In all, “Lisa Cabrera” was suspended and
20 fully demonetized for six weeks due to Defendants’ error.

21 185. Following the lifting of the suspension for the “Lisa Cabrera” channel, the channel
22 remained demonetized, without the SuperChat application, and with 0 subscribers listed for the
23 channel. Defendants waited two additional weeks to restore monetization for individual videos,
24 SuperChat and the prior existing subscribers for the channel. In all, Plaintiff Cabrera lost 8 weeks
25 of revenue due to Defendants’ wrongful conduct and refusal to even look at the video content that
26 they had improperly flagged as “hate speech.” Defendants never offered to compensate her for the
27 lost revenue they caused.

28

1 186. Defendants deputize YouTube users (those who are not members of disfavored
2 groups like those to which Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated belong) to flag videos and
3 channels that purportedly violate Defendants' Community Guidelines and TOS, and then
4 automatically remove, restrict, or demonetize flagged videos, and suspend or remove flagged
5 channels, without verifying that the videos or channels in question actually violate any published
6 standard. As a result of Defendants' abdication to anonymous YouTubers of responsibility for
7 enforcing applicable standards, Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated are subjected to
8 racist, misogynist, abusive trolls who target Plaintiffs' videos and channels for adverse action by
9 Defendants.

10 187. In January of this year, Defendants again suspended all monetization for videos
11 posted to "Lisa Cabrera" following a threat made by YouTube user, Oxyman, during a Livestream
12 broadcast on his channel where he vowed, "I'm gonna make sure [Lisa Cabrera's] channel gets
13 demonetized." Plaintiff Cabrera is informed and believes that Oxyman flagged her channel
14 purportedly for violating Defendants' Community Guidelines or TOS. Without taking any steps to
15 verify the flag or reported violation, Defendants then demonetized the "Lisa Cabrera" channel in
16 January of this year without any prior notification or explanation given to Plaintiff.

17 188. Thereafter, Plaintiff Cabrera promptly appealed the Defendants' action. Defendants
18 informed her that she could reapply for access to monetization only after waiting 30 days.

19 189. After 60 days, Defendants restored monetization for the "Lisa Cabrera" channel
20 videos without any explanation as to why they had demonetized the channel to begin with.
21 Defendants never offered to compensate her for the lost revenue they caused by blindly assuming
22 the validity of Oxyman's flag on the "Lisa Cabrera" channel.

23 190. To compound the financial injury to Plaintiff Cabrera, during this same period,
24 Defendants were running advertisements for the World Health Organization regarding Covid-19
25 prevention, and receiving advertising revenue at the same time that "Lisa Cabrera" was completely
26 demonetized.

27 191. Plaintiff Cabrera has also been the subject of improper posts by YouTube creator,
28 Michael Anderson, a known white supremacist. Michael Anderson posted a false video which had

1 as a subject Plaintiff Cabrera and disparaged her personally. Mr. Anderson also posted Plaintiff's
2 name and residential address in the comments section of his video. After recording an image of the
3 video displaying Lisa Cabrera's name and address in the comments section; Mr. Anderson then
4 removed the video and reposted it without Lisa Cabrera's address.

5 192. Following Mr. Anderson's posting of the video and Plaintiff Cabrera's residential
6 address, numerous additional copies of the video with the address in the comments section
7 appeared on multiple additional YouTube channels.

8 193. Plaintiff Cabrera used Defendants' reporting tool, which sent links to the video to
9 Defendants. Defendants never responded to Plaintiff. Approximately fifty of the subscribers to the
10 "Lisa Cabrera" channel informed Plaintiff that they too had reported links to the video to
11 Defendants using the reporting tool. Defendants took no apparent steps to remove the disparaging
12 video featuring Plaintiff Cabrera's name and false information regarding her, despite the fact that
13 the video clearly violated Defendants' Community Guidelines and TOS, while ignoring dozens of
14 reports with links flagging the Michael Anderson video.

15 194. On another occasion, Michael Anderson made and posted another video which had
16 Plaintiff Cabrera as the subject, and "Lisa Cabrera" in the video's title. This video featured an
17 image of Mr. Anderson in a car brandishing a revolver and talking about Plaintiff Cabrera. Again,
18 Plaintiff Cabrera used Defendants' reporting tool and sent to Defendants a link to the video which
19 communicated a clear threat of violence by Mr. Anderson against Plaintiff Cabrera. Again multiple
20 subscribers to "Lisa Cabrera" communicated to Plaintiff that they too had flagged the video using
21 Defendants' reporting tool. And again, Defendants did absolutely nothing to remove the video, or
22 to suspend or remove Michael Anderson's channel for violating Defendants' Community
23 Guidelines or TOS.

24 195. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' blatant and overt racial
25 discrimination and wrongful conduct, "Lisa Cabrera" has not grown in subscriber numbers, viewer
26 numbers or view times as the channel would have otherwise grown absent Defendants' conduct.
27 Plaintiff Cabrera has been subjected to public disparagement, racist and misogynist abuse, public
28 posting of her private contact information and overt threats of physical violence – all of which has

1 occurred with the tacit, if not overt, approval of Defendants who have repeatedly refused to enforce
2 their own Community Guidelines and TOS. Plaintiff Cabrera has suffered lost revenue directly due
3 to Defendants' racist profiling, A.I., algorithms and other filtering tools, while her channel was
4 demonetized, while her channel was suspended, while Defendants have held her 68 videos in
5 "archive," and Defendants continue to misapply "Restricted Mode" and limited monetization to
6 individual videos she has posted.

7 **3. Catherine Jones**

8 196. Plaintiff Catherine Jones ("Plaintiff Jones") is an African American woman residing
9 in the State of Vermont who is the creator and owner of "Cooking with Carmen Caboom," a
10 YouTube cooking channel for African Americans, and "Carmen Caboom," and "Carmen Caboom
11 Reloaded," two YouTube channels dedicated to developing and posting both parodies and serious
12 videos which discuss and present information regarding issues and current events which are
13 important to the African American community.

14 197. Plaintiff Jones created the "Carmen Caboom" channel in 2010, a backup "Carmen
15 Caboom" channel in 2014, the "Cooking with Carmen Caboom" channel in 2015 and the "Carmen
16 Caboom Reloaded," channel in 2018. Defendants improperly removed the original "Carmen
17 Caboom" channel for purported nudity when no video posted to the channel included any nudity.

18 198. Plaintiff Jones is also a YouTube partner. Since creation, Plaintiff Jones' 2014
19 "Carmen Caboom" channel has posted many videos, several of which Defendants improperly
20 removed as hate speech, the remaining videos have garnered approximately 500 -1,200 views per
21 video overall which have generated approximately \$500 per year.

22 **4. Denotra Nicole Lewis**

23 199. Plaintiff Lewis has been a registered YouTube user since 2006 and has posted her
24 own videos on her YouTube channel, "Nicole's View" since 2016. When she registered "Nicole's
25 View," Plaintiff Lewis answered Defendants' online questionnaire and self-identified as African
26 American or Black. Had Defendants not requested that she provide personal information about
27 herself for her profile, Plaintiff Lewis would not have done so. When she provided this
28 information, she had no idea that Defendants would use information about her race to generate

1 metadata about her, the videos she watched, and the videos she posted or that Defendants would
2 insert, embed or associate such metadata with videos she posted, with her subscribers or with her
3 viewers, much less that Defendants would do so to sell advertising based on race, identity or
4 viewpoint; or that Defendants would filter, censor or restrict her videos based on information
5 regarding her race, identity or viewpoint.

6 200. Plaintiff Lewis creates and posts videos to inform and entertain the African
7 American community with respect to current events and issues of import to Black Americans. To
8 date, she has posted 748 videos to her channel, some of which Defendants have removed from the
9 platform, leaving only 731 of which remain available to be viewed by the public. While “Nicole’s
10 View” has generated in excess of 10.6 million views since 2016, she has generated approximately
11 \$25,000 in all from those views.

12 201. Plaintiff Lewis is informed and believes that Defendants have gathered extensive
13 information in order to generate metadata based on that information, and then insert, embed,
14 append, or associate such metadata with videos posted on “Nicole’s View.” Defendants gathered
15 information regarding her race (Defendants know that Plaintiff Lewis is an African American
16 woman); that she makes and posts videos which have as a subject, relate to or discuss issues and
17 current events that are important to members of the African American community; her subscribers
18 either self-identify as members of the African American community or watch many videos posted
19 by other creators who have self-identified as members of the African American community; and
20 many of those who view her videos either self-identify as members of the African American
21 community or watch videos posted by other creators who have self-identified as members of the
22 African American community.

23 202. Plaintiff Lewis is informed and believes that Defendants have applied “Restricted
24 Mode” and have limited monetization for the videos she posted to “Nicole’s View” because
25 Defendants have a policy and practice of using A.I., algorithms, and other filtering tools to classify,
26 curate, censor, and sell advertisements for YouTube videos based metadata Defendants create from
27 information regarding the race, identity and viewpoint of creators, subscribers and viewers, rather
28 than the content of the videos.

1 203. Defendants routinely limit viewer access by applying “Restricted Mode” and by
2 limiting monetization to most of the videos posted on the “Nicole’s View” channel, despite the fact
3 that the videos fully comply with all of Defendants’ Community Guidelines and TOS, and contain
4 no nudity, sexualized scenes or language, graphic depictions of sex or violence, drug abuse, or
5 alcohol consumption. Defendants have applied “Restricted Mode” to most of the videos posted,
6 and have allowed only limited monetization to some videos, without any explanation or rationale
7 other than to indicate that the “content identified is unsuitable for most advertisers.” Plaintiff
8 Lewis is informed and believes that the sole reason that Defendants find the content is “unsuitable
9 for most advertisers,” is because Defendants discriminate against Plaintiffs and other persons
10 similarly situated based on race, e.g., the content was created by an African American, relates to
11 issues and events of concern to the African American community, and is viewed by many members
12 of the African American community.

13 204. For certain periods over the past four years, Defendants have shadow banned certain
14 individual compliant videos posted by Plaintiff Lewis on “Nicole’s View.” During various periods
15 of time, those videos did not appear in YouTube searches using the terms “Nicole Lewis,” or
16 “Nicole’s View,” or using their individual video titles as search terms.

17 205. “Nicole’s View” video content consists roughly of 75% pre-recorded videos and
18 25% Livestream broadcasts. For Livestream broadcasts, she sometimes has as many as 1000
19 viewers participating. Plaintiff Lewis employs designated moderators to monitor, control and
20 censor viewer comments to ensure compliance with Defendants’ Community Guidelines and TOS,
21 promptly removing any non-compliant comments and blocking offending participants.

22 206. For the past two years, Defendants have used A.I., algorithms, and filtering tools to
23 restrict the reach of videos posted on “Nicole’s View,” resulting in stagnant subscriber and viewer
24 numbers. “Nicole’s View” is no longer growing. The channel’s analytics page from month to
25 month reflects only minor changes to the numbers of subscribers, viewers, and view times. To
26 avoid the impact of Defendant’ A.I., algorithms and filtering tools on Defendants’ metadata
27 generated from video titles and tags, Plaintiff Lewis intentionally self-censors: (a) she avoids using
28 controversial video titles; (b) she avoids using abbreviations like “BLM,” “KKK;” terms such as

1 “Black,” “White,” “Racism,” “Boogaloo,” “White Supremacy,” “Racial Profiling,” “Police
2 Shootings,” “Police Brutality,” “Black Lives Matter;” names, such as those of individuals such as
3 those killed by law enforcement, “Bill Cosby,” “Louis Farrakhan;” names of organizations such as
4 “Ku Klux Klan,” “Nazi,” “Neo-Nazi,” “Aryan Brotherhood,” and euphemisms that are known and
5 particular to the African American Community; she intentionally misspells terms such as “Black,”
6 “White,” “Race,” “Racism,” and “Racial Profiling,” because Defendants routinely flags such terms.

7 207. Despite Plaintiff Lewis’ efforts to self-censor and avoid the reach of Defendants’
8 A.I., algorithms, and filtering tools, most of the videos posted on “Nicole’s View” have only
9 limited monetization, if any.

10 208. On February 11, 2020, Plaintiff Lewis received an email from Defendants indicating
11 that “SuperChat was disabled,” purportedly because “Nicole’s View” was using the original
12 content of other YouTubers. However, after a week, it became apparent that Defendants had not
13 merely disabled SuperChat, but had completely demonetized the entire “Nicole’s View” channel.
14 Defendants did so without notice or explanation. Plaintiff Lewis promptly filed an appeal of the
15 decision to disable SuperChat and to demonetize the entire channel.

16 209. Mindful of the stringent standards which Defendants have always applied to the
17 channels of Plaintiffs and other persons similarly situated, Plaintiff Lewis has always followed
18 Defendants’ Community Guidelines, and TOS. Whenever she uses a news clip, she limits the clip
19 to several minutes and generates her own original commentary as video content to accompany the
20 clip. The originators of all news clips incorporated into videos posted by Plaintiff Lewis are always
21 accorded full proper and credit in the video so that there is no possibility of viewers confusing the
22 news clip with her original commentary or content.

23 210. Defendants did not respond to Plaintiff Lewis’ appeal. On or about June 7, 2020,
24 she suddenly noticed that Defendants had resumed placing advertisements on videos posted to
25 “Nicole’s View.” When she checked the channel’s analytics page, it reflected that her monetized
26 videos were again generating revenue and her Livestream broadcasts were generating donations.
27 Defendants have neither explained why the channel was fully demonetized for nearly two months,
28

1 nor why it was remonetized; nor have they offered compensation for the revenue which the channel
2 lost during that period.

3 211. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants’ racial discrimination and wrongful
4 conduct, “Nicole’s View” has not grown in subscriber numbers, viewer numbers or view times and
5 it would have grown otherwise and Plaintiff Lewis has been deprived of significant revenue from
6 Defendants’ sale of advertising, SuperChat and Livestream donations over the life of her channel.
7 Plaintiff Lewis’ videos were all fully demonetized between February 11, 2020 and June 7, 2020,
8 during which period “Nicole’s View” generated no income whatsoever.

9 **V. CLASS ALLEGATIONS**

10 212. Plaintiffs bring this action on behalf of themselves and a putative class of similarly
11 situated persons who use or have used YouTube or any of the services that Defendants offer in
12 connection with YouTube and who come within the definition or classification of a protected class
13 of persons under 42 U.S.C. 1981 (the “Class”).

14 213. Each and every claim alleged in this case is also alleged on behalf of every member
15 of the Class.

16 214. The Class seeks both monetary damages, restitution, and/or other injunctive relief on
17 behalf of any persons who fall within the Class Definition:

18 All persons or entities in the United States who are or were:

- 19 (i) a person or entity defined or classified as a protected class or
20 person under 42 U.S.C. §1981; and
21 (ii) are members, users and or consumers of YouTube who uploaded,
22 posted, or viewed video content on YouTube subject to
23 Google/YouTube’s Terms of Service, Mission Statement,
24 Community Guidelines, and/or any other content-based filtering,
25 monetization, distribution, personal data use policies, advertising or
26 regulation and practices any other regulations or practices that are
27 related to the YouTube Platform on or after January 1, 2015 and
28 continuing through to June 16, 2020 (the “Class Period”).

1 Excluded from the Class are Defendants and their employees,
2 affiliates, parents, subsidiaries, and co-conspirators, whether or not
3 named in this Complaint, and the United States government.

4 215. Class certification for the Class is authorized under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure
5 23 and applies to both claims for injunctive and equitable relief, including restitution, under Rule
6 23(b) (2) and for monetary damages under Rule 23(b)(3).

7 216. There are at least 42 million members of the Class.

8 217. The number of persons who fall within the definitions of the Class are so numerous
9 and geographically dispersed so as to make joinder of all members of the Class or Subclass in their
10 individual capacities impracticable, inefficient, and unmanageable, and without class wide relief,
11 each member of the Class would effectively be denied his, her, its, or their rights to prosecute and
12 obtain legal and equitable relief based on the claims and allegations averred in this Complaint.

13 218. There are questions of law and fact common to the Class that relate to and/or are
14 dispositive of the nature and allegations of unlawful conduct alleged in the Complaint, and the
15 nature, type and common pattern of injury and harm caused by that unlawful conduct and sustained
16 by the putative members of the Class and Subclass including, but not limited to:

17 a. Whether Defendants' regulations and content-based restrictions violate the
18 free speech, antidiscrimination, consumer fraud and unfair competition, and contractual rights of
19 the members of the Class with respect to each cause of action averred by the Plaintiffs below.

20 b. Whether Defendants concealed, misrepresented or omitted to disclose
21 material policies and practices regarding the unlawful regulation of video content, advertising,
22 distribution, monetization, contractual obligations, and characteristics of the YouTube Platform to
23 the members of the Class;

24 c. Whether Defendants use or have used unlawful, discriminatory,
25 anticompetitive and fraudulent, deceptive, unfair, and/or bad faith filtering tools and practices, in
26 the code and operation of their machine based, algorithmic, or A.I. filtering tools, and/or other
27 practices and procedures to review, regulate, and restrict content, and/or regulate and restrict the
28 advertising, monetization, distribution, and property rights of the Class;

- 1 d. Whether Defendants are or have engaged in discriminatory practices against
2 the members of the Class based on protected characteristics under 42 U.S.C § 1981 or the Unruh
3 Civil Rights Act;
- 4 e. Whether Defendants breached or are in breach of their form consumer
5 contracts and obligations to the Class;
- 6 f. Whether Defendants have or are engaged in unlawful, deceptive, unfair, or
7 anticompetitive practices that violate federal or California law, and harmed and injured the Class;
- 8 g. Whether the conduct of Defendants, as alleged in this Complaint, caused
9 injury to the business and property of Plaintiffs and the members of the Class;
- 10 h. Whether Defendants’ alleged regulations, practices, and conduct have caused
11 or threaten to cause irreparable harm to the speech of the Class so as to warrant the issuing of
12 temporary, preliminary and/or final injunctive relief and corresponding declaratory relief with
13 respect to the legal rights of the Class;
- 14 i. The scope, nature, substance, and enforcement of injunctive and equitable
15 relief sought by the Class;
- 16 j. Whether Defendants were unjustly enriched or obtained profits or ill-gotten
17 financial gains as a result of the unlawful, discriminatory, deceptive, unfair, or anticompetitive
18 practices perpetrated against the Class;
- 19 k. Whether Defendants breached or are in breach of their contractual
20 obligations, implied duty of good faith and fair dealing, and or other promises under the consumer
21 form contracts entered into with members of the Class during the Class Period;
- 22 l. Whether Defendants’ content-based regulations and filtering practices, on
23 their face and/or as applied, violate the free speech rights of Plaintiffs and the Class under
24 California or federal law; and
- 25 m. whether the Class is entitled to declaratory and other relief based on
26 Defendants’ assertion of immunity from liability under the Communications Decency Act, 15
27 U.S.C. § 230 (c) (the “CDA”), with respect to any of the claims or allegations asserted by Plaintiffs
28 and the Class in this Lawsuit.

1 219. Each of individual named Plaintiffs is a person protected under 42 U.S.C. § 1981,
2 and a member of the Class.

3 220. The claims of Plaintiffs are typical of and identical to those of the Class.

4 221. Plaintiffs will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the members of the Class.

5 222. Plaintiffs are represented by counsel who are competent and experienced in the
6 prosecution and defense of similar claims and litigation, including class actions filed, prosecuted,
7 defended, or litigated in under California and federal law, in California and federal courts, in
8 connection with claims and certification of consumer and civil rights classes composed of members
9 who reside in California and/or the United States.

10 223. The prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the Class would
11 create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications.

12 224. The questions of law and fact common to the members of the Class predominate
13 over any questions of law or fact affecting only individual members of the Class or Subclass,
14 including legal and factual issues relating to liability and the nature of the harm caused by
15 Defendants' unlawful actions.

16 225. The questions of law and fact common to the members of the Class also
17 predominate over any questions of law or fact affecting only individual members of the Class
18 because all claims in this Lawsuit are governed under California or controlling federal law,
19 including legal and factual issues relating to liability and the nature of the harm caused by
20 Defendants' unlawful actions.

21 226. A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient
22 adjudication of this controversy. Treatment as a class action will permit a large number of
23 similarly situated persons to adjudicate their common claims in a single forum simultaneously,
24 efficiently and without the duplication of effort and expense that numerous individual actions
25 would engender.

26 227. Certification of the Class is also superior to other available methods for the fair and
27 efficient adjudication of this controversy because and all claims in this Lawsuit must be brought
28 and venued in a court of competent jurisdiction located Santa Clara County.

1 233. On November 19, 2019, the Honorable Brian C. Walsh, Judge of the Superior Court
2 of the County of Santa Clara (the “State Court”), ruled in *Prager University v. Google LLC*, Santa
3 Clara County Superior Court Case No. 19CV340667, that 47 U.S.C. § 230(c) “immunizes service
4 providers [such as Defendants] who endeavor to restrict access to material deemed objectionable,”
5 by employing filters to remove users’ content from their platforms based on the political, religious,
6 or other personal identity or viewpoint of the user rather than the actual online content posted by
7 the user on the platform. 2019 WL 8640569, at *7 (Cal. Super. Ct. Nov. 19, 2019).

8 234. Furthermore, the State Court ruled that, notwithstanding the express good faith
9 language in Section 230(c)(2)(A), the content filtering and restrictions that internet service
10 providers like Defendants engage in are not subject to any good faith, objective judicial review of
11 the underlying content, or the internet providers filtering or restriction practices, but reside within
12 and are left to the sole, unfettered discretion of the internet provider who acts to filter and restrict
13 content at its whim. 2019 WL 8640569, at *10-11.

14 235. In *Prager*, therefore, at least one state trial court has construed Section 230(c) as
15 granting Defendants absolute immunity for all content curation decisions, including decisions
16 based not on the actual on line material, but on the race, sex, or other identity and dismissing
17 plaintiffs’ claims without leave to amend despite detailed factual allegations, evidence, and party
18 admissions of identity and viewpoint based discrimination and animus in regulating and filtering
19 speech on YouTube). 2019 WL 8640569, at *10-12.

20 236. A true and correct copy of the November 19, 2019-Order issued by the Hon. Brian
21 Walsh, granting Defendants’ immunity and dismissing all of plaintiffs’ claims for relief without
22 leave to amend is attached as Exhibit B hereto.

23 237. On December 19, 2019, plaintiff timely filed a notice of appeal. The notice of
24 appeal rendered state court decision uncitable and of no precedential or legal value unless and until
25 the California appellate courts affirm the application of Section 230(c) to intentional discrimination
26 and the federal courts, which are the final authority on federal questions of law, concur in that
27 decision.

28

1 238. On May 18, 2020, the United States Department of Justice intervened in the *Divino*
2 case and filed a brief defending the application of Section 230(c) to ISP's who filter, review,
3 restrict, block, or censor on line speech based on a user's racial, sexual, or other identity or
4 viewpoint without regard to whether the online speech of the user violated the content based rules
5 of the internet site or the provisions of Section 230(c). A true and correct copy of the United States
6 Department of Justice's Notice of Intervention (Dkt.# 46) and Memorandum of Law in Support
7 (Dkt.#47) are attached as Exhibit C.

8 239. On May 28, 2020 the President of The United States issued an Executive Order
9 repudiating both the State Court decisions in *Prager* and contradicting the United States' position
10 that Section 230(c) applies or can be applied to an ISP who engages in intentional race , sex or
11 other identity or viewpoint based discrimination alleged in this Lawsuit and *Divino*.

12 240. In the May 28 Order, the President directed the U.S. Department of Justice ("DOJ")
13 and other Article 2 agencies or departments to enforce the "policy of the United States" that
14 immunity law may not be applied or enforced with respect to any on line, publishing, filtering,
15 blocking, or censorship conduct undertaken by an Internet Service Provider (ISP) that was based in
16 any part on the user's race, sex, or other personal identity or viewpoint.

17 241. The May 28 Executive Order states in pertinent part:

18 **Section 2 Protections Against Online Censorship.**

19 (a) It is the policy of the United States to foster clear ground rules promoting free and open
20 debate on the internet. Prominent among the ground rules governing that debate is the
21 immunity from liability created by section 230(c) of the Communications Decency Act
22 (section 230(c)). 47 U.S.C. 230(c). It is the policy of the United States that the scope of that
23 immunity should be clarified: the immunity should not extend beyond its text and purpose
24 to provide protection for those who purport to provide users a forum for free and open
25 speech, but in reality use their power over a vital means of communication to engage in
26 deceptive or pretextual actions stifling free and open debate by censoring certain
27 viewpoints. * * * *

28

1 242. In particular, subparagraph (c)(2) expressly addresses protections from "civil
2 liability" and specifies that an interactive computer service provider may not be made liable "on
3 account of" its decision in "good faith" to restrict access to content that it considers to be "obscene,
4 lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing or otherwise objectionable." It is the policy
5 of the United States to ensure that, to the maximum extent permissible under the law, this provision
6 is not distorted to provide liability protection for online platforms that -- far from acting in "good
7 faith" to remove objectionable content -- instead engage in deceptive or pretextual actions (often
8 contrary to their stated TOS) to stifle viewpoints with which they disagree. Section 230 was not
9 intended to allow a handful of companies to grow into titans controlling vital avenues for our
10 national discourse under the guise of promoting open forums for debate, and then to provide those
11 behemoths blanket immunity when they use their power to censor content and silence viewpoints
12 that they dislike. When an interactive computer service provider removes or restricts access to
13 content and its actions do not meet the criteria of subparagraph (c)(2)(A), it is engaged in editorial
14 conduct. It is the policy of the United States that such a provider should properly lose the limited
15 liability shield of subparagraph (c)(2)(A) and be exposed to liability like any traditional editor and
16 publisher that is not an online provider.

17 **(b)** To advance the policy described in subsection (a) of this section, all executive
18 departments and agencies should ensure that their application of section 230(c)
19 properly reflects the narrow purpose of the section and take all appropriate actions in
20 this regard. In addition, within 60 days of the date of this order, the Secretary of
21 Commerce (Secretary), in Case 5:19-cv-04749-VKD Document 57 Filed 06/01/20
22 Page 6 of 8 consultation with the Attorney General, and acting through the National
23 Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), shall file a petition
24 for rulemaking with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requesting
25 that the FCC expeditiously propose regulations to clarify:

26 (i) the interaction between subparagraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of section 230, in
27 particular to clarify and determine the circumstances under which a provider of an
28 interactive computer service that restricts access to content in a manner not

1 specifically protected by subparagraph (c)(2)(A) may also not be able to claim
 2 protection under subparagraph (c)(1), which merely states that a provider shall not
 3 be treated as a publisher or speaker for making third-party content available and
 4 does not address the provider's responsibility for its own editorial decisions; (ii) the
 5 conditions under which an action restricting access to or availability of material is
 6 not "taken in good faith" within the meaning of subparagraph (c)(2)(A) of section
 7 230, particularly whether actions can be "taken in good faith" if they are:
 8 (A) deceptive, pretextual, or inconsistent with a provider's terms of service; or (B) taken
 9 after failing to provide adequate notice, reasoned explanation, or a meaningful opportunity
 10 to be heard; and (iii) any other proposed regulations that the NTIA concludes may be
 11 appropriate to advance the policy described in subsection (a) of this section. (c) The
 12 Department of Justice shall review the viewpoint-based speech restrictions imposed by each
 13 online platform identified in the report described in subsection (b) of this section and assess
 14 whether any online platforms are problematic vehicles for government speech due to
 15 viewpoint discrimination, deception to consumers, or other bad practices. * * * *

16 **Sec. 4. Federal Review of Unfair or Deceptive Acts or Practices.** (a) It is the
 17 policy of the United States that large online platforms, such as Twitter and
 18 Facebook, as the critical means of promoting the free flow of speech and ideas
 19 today, should not restrict protected speech. The Supreme Court has noted that social
 20 media sites, as the modern public square, "can provide perhaps the most powerful
 21 mechanisms available to a private citizen to make his or her voice heard."

22 *Packingham v. North Carolina*, 137 S. Ct. 1730, 1737 (2017). Communication
 23 through these channels has become important for meaningful participation in
 24 American democracy, including to petition elected leaders. These sites are
 25 providing an important forum to the public for others to engage in free expression
 26 and debate. *Cf. PruneYard Shopping Center v. Robins*, 447 U.S. 74, 85-89 (1980). *

27 * * * Sec. 5. State Review of Unfair or Deceptive Acts or Practices and Anti-
 28 Discrimination Laws.

1 (a) The Attorney General shall establish a working group regarding the potential
2 enforcement of State statutes that prohibit online platforms from engaging in unfair or
3 deceptive acts or practices. The working group shall also develop model legislation for
4 consideration by legislatures in States where existing statutes do not protect Americans
5 from such unfair and deceptive acts and practices. The working group shall invite State
6 Attorneys General for discussion and consultation, as appropriate and consistent with
7 applicable law.

8 (b) Complaints described in section 4(b) of this order will be shared with the working
9 group, consistent with applicable law. The working group shall also collect publicly
10 available information regarding the following:

- 11 (i) increased scrutiny of users based on the other users they choose to follow, or their
12 interactions with other users;
- 13 (ii) algorithms to suppress content or users based on indications of political alignment or
14 viewpoint;
- 15 (iii) differential policies allowing for otherwise impermissible behavior, when committed by
16 accounts associated with the Chinese Communist Party or other anti-democratic
17 associations or governments;
- 18 (iv) reliance on third-party entities, including contractors, media organizations, and
19 individuals, with indicia of bias to review content; and
- 20 (v) acts that limit the ability of users with particular viewpoints to earn money on the
21 platform compared with other users similarly situated.

22 A true and correct copy of the President’s Executive Order is attached as Exhibit D to this
23 Complaint.

24 243. In *Divino*, the “related” case to this Lawsuit, the LGBTQ+ plaintiffs asserted a claim
25 for a declaratory judgment under 28 U.S.C. § 2201, *et seq.* asking this Court to declare that the
26 immunity provision of Section 230(c) does not extend to intentional identity or viewpoint
27 discrimination conduct by an ISP and, if not so construed, the law is unconstitutional, both as
28 applied and on its face, under *Denver Area* and progeny.

1 244. On June 2, 2020, this Court held a hearing in the *Divino* case on, among other
2 things, the extent to which Section 230(c) applies, if at all, to intentional identity or viewpoint
3 based discrimination by Defendants.

4 245. Defendants argued that Section 230(c)(1) immunizes them from identity and
5 viewpoint based discrimination because such discrimination is “publishing conduct” that Congress
6 enacted Section 230(c)(1) to protect.

7 246. Defendants contended that Section 230(c)(1) grants absolute immunity to an ISP for
8 “publishing conduct” that includes discriminating against user based on the person’s racial or
9 sexual identity to filter, review, or block the access of the online user or its content on a website
10 that is otherwise open to the general public.

11 247. Although Defendants conceded at the oral argument that immunity might not be
12 available in limited but unspecified “circumstances” involving race discrimination, Defendants
13 maintained that intentional and systematic discrimination used to profile, review, and block the
14 access and content of LGBTQ+ users was a traditional publishing function that comes within the
15 conduct that Congress intended to protect under Section 230(c)(1).

16 248. The LGBTQ+ plaintiffs in *Divino* argued that Section 230(c)(1) does not prevent the
17 enforcement of contractual promises and other preexisting legal relationships between an ISP and
18 user, including contractual based promises that Defendants may only filter, review and impose
19 access restrictions on users based on the content of the video under specific rules that apply equally
20 to all without reference or consideration of the user’s identity or viewpoint.

21 249. The breaching of these legally enforceable promises and obligations, express or
22 implied, in a contract and license agreements between a user and an the ISP, and the other
23 obligations and rights codified in the state or federal laws that regulate businesses that prohibit
24 discrimination based on identity are neither specific or unique to publishers or traditional editorial
25 function, and do not implicate liability for third party defamation or wrongs, but are legal
26 obligations that apply to all business under contract and other legal obligations imposed on any
27 business and its customer or consumer.

28

1 250. The *Divino* plaintiffs also argued, as the Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated
2 argue in this Lawsuit, that Section 230(c) applies only to the filtering, reviewing, restricting, or
3 blocking of on line “material” not to or based upon a person’s identity or viewpoint, because racial
4 profiling and identity or viewpoint censorship has nothing to do with and does not further the
5 express statutory purpose of protecting minors from “offensive material” on the internet.

6 251. The extension of Section 230(c)(1) beyond a limited immunity for defamation and
7 other liabilities that arise from the failure to block unlawful third party content also renders Section
8 230(c)(2) statutory limits prohibiting bad faith or discriminatory filtering and blocking of on line
9 appropriate content unenforceable, meaningless, and pure statutory surplusage.

10 252. Finally, as in *Divino*, the application of either Section 230(c)(1) or (2) to immunize
11 an ISP that uses identity or viewpoint discrimination to regulate on line speech is an
12 unconstitutional permissive speech regulation law violates the First Amendment under *Denver*
13 *Area* and progeny.

14 253. The use of Section 230(c) to censor users based on their race, identity, or viewpoint
15 is not viewpoint neutral, narrowly tailored to protect children from “offensive” material without
16 creating a risk of erroneous private veto over otherwise appropriate speech, and eviscerates the pre-
17 existing legal relationships, including the contractual and statutory obligations, and rights of the
18 parties that would otherwise be enforceable in a court of law.

19 254. The Court has taken the arguments under submission.

20 255. A true and correct copy of the transcript of the Section 230(c) arguments recorded at
21 the hearing in *Divino* is attached as Exhibit E to this complaint.

22 **B. Justiciable Legal Controversies Currently Exist Regarding The Construction**
23 **And Constitutionality Of 47 U.S.C. § 230(c).**

24 256. At least four actual controversies now exist between the parties regarding the proper
25 construction, scope, application, and constitutionality of the CDA statutory immunity granted to
26 internet service providers given the unique allegations and claims asserted against Defendants in
27 this case.
28

1 257. Each of the controversies arise from a dispute about the extent to which Section
2 230(c) immunizes an internet service provider that discriminates against users because of the user’s
3 race, personal identity or viewpoints, including any profiling or consideration of Plaintiffs’ race in
4 making access decisions on YouTube

5 **1. An Actual Controversy Exist As To Whether The Provisions Of Section**
6 **230(c) Immunize Defendants From Race, Personal Identity, or**
7 **Viewpoint Discrimination In Filtering And Blocking On line Content**
8 **And Access**

9 258. A justiciable controversy exist as to whether Section 230(c)(1) or (2) grants
10 immunity to an ISP that breaches and express or implied contractual promises not to discriminate
11 against users based on a person’s identity, or viewpoint when reviewing, restricting, or denying
12 access to YouTube under license and use agreements between the user and the ISP.

13 **2. An Actual Controversy Exists As To Whether Section 230(c) Immunizes**
14 **Defendants For Conduct That Violates**

15 259. A second justiciable controversy exists as to whether the provisions of Section
16 230(c)(1) or (2) permit Defendants to engage unlawful conduct that uses person’s race, identity, or
17 viewpoint to restrict on line material and access in contravention of established federal and state
18 laws prohibiting such discrimination in contract, 42 U.S.C. § 1981 and Unruh Civil Rights Act,
19 Cal. Civ. Code §§51, *et seq.*, unlawful, deceptive or anticompetitive business practices, including
20 conduct prohibited under section 1124 of the Lanham Act and section 17200 of the California
21 Business and Professions Code, and discriminatory censorship in violation of the Liberty of Speech
22 Clause enshrined in Article 1, Section 2 of the California Constitution.

23 **3. The Provisions And/or Application Of Any Part Of Section 230(c) To**
24 **Claims Arising Out Of Race, Identity, Or Viewpoint Discrimination Is**
25 **Unconstitutional**

26 260. As a third justiciable controversy exists as to whether Section 230(c) is
27 unconstitutional because it violates the First Amendment and/or Equal Protection clause of the U.S.
28 Constitution on its face and/or as applied to this Lawsuit.

 261. Construing any provision of the “Good Samaritan Immunity For Blocking On line
Material” under Section 230(c) as permitting an ISP to use a person’s race, identity, or viewpoint to

1 filter, review, or block on line access or content is unconstitutional under the test governing the
2 constitutionality of permissive private party speech laws.

3 262. Section 230(c) (1) and (2) is congressional law that was enacted to permit a private
4 party to regulate on line speech. Consequently, under *Denver Area* and progeny, the law cannot be
5 applied in a manner that is NOT identity or viewpoint neutral, must be narrowly tailored and
6 applied to avoid the risk of erroneous private censorship, and may not be used to interfere or alter
7 the pre-existing legal relationships between the parties.

8 **4. The Executive Order Precludes The Government From Arguing Or**
9 **Enforcing Section 230(c) To Claims Based On Intentional Identity Or**
10 **Viewpoint Discrimination.**

11 263. A fourth justiciable controversy exists as to legal effect of the President's Executive
12 Order on the application of Section 230(c) to on line content and access regulation based on a
13 user's identity and viewpoint, as is set forth in this Lawsuit.

14 264. In the Order, the President declares that is the policy of the United States to ensure
15 that Section 230(c) must be applied in a manner that is viewpoint neutral and does not permit ISPs
16 to censor on line content or block on line user access based on the identity or viewpoint of the user.
17 If given full legal affect, the Executive Order mandates the obvious: Section 230(c) applies only to
18 filtering and blocking "offensive material," not the persons who use the internet.

19 265. The Executive Order provides that its application does not create a substantive legal
20 right that did not exist before, or otherwise alter the parties' relationships. But that language begs
21 the question as to what rights and relationships already exist under Section 230(c) in this Lawsuit.
22 The Executive Order directs the United States to enforce the law and promulgate regulations that
23 preclude what Defendants want to use its provisions for in this Lawsuit: to discriminate against
24 Plaintiffs based on their race, identity and viewpoints.

25 266. Consequently, the Executive Order also creates a conflict of interest for the
26 Department of Justice under Rule 5.1. The Order specifically instructs DOJ to take all steps,
27 including, but not limited to, promulgating regulations to ensure that Section 230(c) is not and will
28 never be used to permit identity or viewpoint discrimination in the regulation of on line content.

1 267. At the same time, DOJ has intervened and formally taken the opposite position
2 before this Court regarding the application of Section 230(c) to the very identity and viewpoint
3 discrimination that the President has instructed DOJ to prohibit. That position effectively precludes
4 DOJ or any agency of the United States from promulgating and enforcing the very regulations and
5 other steps in the Order that preclude identity and viewpoint discrimination.

6 268. Furthermore, because of the conflicting positions taken by DOJ in *Divino*, the
7 United States may be judicially estopped from enforcing or giving any affect to the President's
8 Executive Order.

9 **C. Plaintiffs Served Rule 5.1 Notice On The U.S. Attorney General**

10 269. In challenging the Constitutionality of the CDA, Plaintiffs must comply with
11 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.1 which requires that "[A] party . . . promptly [] file a notice of
12 constitutional question stating the question and identifying the paper that raises," where "a federal
13 statute is questioned and the parties do not include the United States, one of its agencies, or one of
14 its officers or employees in an official capacity." Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.1. Under Rule 5.1 "statute"
15 means any congressional enactment that would qualify as an "Act of Congress."

16 270. Rule 5.1 requires more than the court certification provided by 28 U.S.C. § 2403;
17 Rule 5.1 requires notice and certification to the United States Attorney General of any
18 constitutional challenge to a federal statute, not merely to challenges of laws "affecting the public
19 interest." 28 U.S.C. § 2403.

20 271. The CDA constitutes a federal statute under Rule 5.1.

21 272. Plaintiffs have served the Rule 5.1 Notice on the United States Attorney General
22 stating that Plaintiffs are challenging the constitutionality of 47 U.S.C. § 230(c), identifying the
23 CDA, and attaching a copy of this Complaint, and a copy of Judge Walsh's November 19,
24 2019 Order.

25 273. Plaintiffs have served the Rule 5.1 Notice and attachments by certified mail and
26 have sent a copy of the Notice and attachments to the United States Attorney General by overnight
27 delivery service.

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1 those agreements are governed and subject to California law, including federal law that California
2 is obligated to enforce under the supremacy clause of the U.S. Constitution.

3 280. The elements of a breach of contract under California law are: (1) existence of a
4 valid contract between Plaintiffs and Defendants; (2) Plaintiffs' performance (or excuse for non-
5 performance) under the contract; (3) Defendants' breach of the contract; and (4) proof of harm or
6 financial injury as a result of the breach.

7 281. Plaintiffs and Defendants have entered into agreement, including the TOS and
8 related agreement(s) that are enforceable contract(s) governed by and under California law;

9 282. Plaintiffs have performed their obligations under the TOS and/or other contract(s),
10 including complying with YouTube's viewpoint neutral content based access rules and granting
11 Defendants a perpetual and irrevocable license to their video content and all personal data and
12 consumer information derived or used in connection with Plaintiffs' content on or use of YouTube.

13 283. Defendants have breached their promises to provide Plaintiffs' equal access to
14 YouTube and all related services that Defendants offer to other users, and are subject only to
15 content based rules that are viewpoint neutral and apply equally to all. Specifically, Defendants
16 have denied and interfered with Plaintiffs' right of equal access to YouTube and its related services
17 by profiling and using Plaintiffs' race, identity or viewpoints, not merely the material in the video
18 content, to review, filter and restrict Plaintiffs' access to YouTube in a manner that is not permitted
19 by federal and California law.

20 284. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' breach, Plaintiffs have suffered
21 monetary damages and other financial harms and losses in excess of \$500.00 per year plus other
22 lost revenues, the total amount of which will be determined at trial.

23 285. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' breach, Plaintiffs have also suffered
24 irreparable harm to their contractual based rights of free speech and expression provided for under
25 the express and implied provisions of the TOS and other contract(s).

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1 under the contract; (3) any conditions precedent to the defendant's performance occurred; (4) the
2 defendant unfairly interfered with the plaintiff's rights to receive the benefits of the contract; and
3 (5) the plaintiff was harmed by the defendant's conduct. Judicial Council of California Civil Jury
4 Instruction 325.

5 291. Plaintiffs and Defendants have entered into contracts, including the TOS, in
6 connection with Plaintiffs' use and access to YouTube and the related services Defendants offer
7 under those contracts.

8 292. Plaintiffs have fulfilled their obligations under the TOS and other agreement(s) and
9 fulfilled or performed the conditions precedent, if any, under those agreement(s), including
10 complying with YouTube's viewpoint neutral content based access rules and granting Defendants
11 an irrevocable and perpetual license to their video content and any personal information and data
12 derived from Plaintiffs' use or content on YouTube, and paying Defendants other consideration for
13 services and access.

14 293. Defendants unfairly interfered with Plaintiffs' rights by profiling and using their
15 race, personal identity or viewpoint to deny them equal access to YouTube and its related services
16 based on conduct that that is prohibited by and not permitted under California or federal law.

17 294. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' breach, Plaintiffs have suffered
18 monetary damages and other financial harms and losses in excess of \$500.00 per year plus other
19 lost revenues, including the monetary value of unlawfully acquired property and license rights to
20 Plaintiffs' content and the personal data and information derived from Plaintiffs and their
21 subscribers and viewers, the total amount of which will be determined at trial.

22 295. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' breach, Plaintiffs have also suffered
23 irreparable harm to their contractual based speech rights and expression provided for subject to
24 only to viewpoint neutral content based rules as set forth in the express and implied provisions of
25 the TOS and other contract(s).

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1 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**
2 **FOR PROMISSORY ESTOPPEL**
3 **(On Behalf Of Each Plaintiff Individually And The Class)**

4 296. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference in whole or in part the allegations
5 alleged in paragraphs 1 through 295.

6 297. “The elements of promissory estoppel are (1) a promise, (2) the promisor should
7 reasonably expect the promise to induce action or forbearance on the part of the promisee or a third
8 person, (3) the promise induces action or forbearance by the promisee or a third person (which we
9 refer to as detrimental reliance), and (4) injustice can be avoided only by enforcement of the
10 promise. *West v. JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.*, 214 Cal.App.4th 780, 803 (2013).

11 298. Defendants have made at least 5 promises to Plaintiffs and other similarly situated
12 users:

13 a. Defendants promise Plaintiffs equal access to YouTube subject only to
14 viewpoint neutral content-based rules that apply equally to all users;

15 b. Defendants promise not to discriminate against Plaintiffs based on their race,
16 sexual identity, commercial status or identity, or the personal viewpoints except as permitted under
17 California or controlling federal law;

18 c. Defendants promise to provide viewer and audience reach, advertising,
19 subscription, monetization, and content curation services to Plaintiffs and other users who comply
20 with YouTube’s viewpoint neutral content-based rules;

21 d. Defendants promise only to use, appropriate, or derive revenue from
22 Plaintiffs’ content and data, and that of their viewers and subscribers subject to Defendants’
23 honoring and fulfilling their express and implied terms and obligations under the TOS and other
24 agreement(s); and

25 e. Defendants promise to operate YouTube as a public forum for freedom of
26 expression that is subject only to narrowly tailored, viewpoint neutral content based rules.
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1 306. Title 42, Section 1981 of the U.S. Code codifies the right of each individual member
2 of a protected racial classification to “have the same right in every State and Territory to make and
3 enforce contracts, to sue, be parties, give evidence, and to the full and equal benefit of all laws and
4 proceedings for the security of persons and property as is enjoyed by white citizens.” 42 U.S.C. §
5 1981(a).

6 307. The statute defines “make and enforce contracts” as including “the making,
7 performance, modification, and termination of contracts, and the enjoyment of all benefits,
8 privileges, terms, and conditions of the contractual relationship.” *Id.* § 1981(b). The statutory
9 protections apply to both “nongovernmental discrimination” and “impairment under color of State
10 law.” *Id.* § 1981(c).

11 308. The elements of a claim for relief under 42 U.S.C. § 1981 are: (1) Plaintiff is a
12 member of a protected class; (2) impairment of a contractual relationship under which plaintiff has
13 rights; (3) defendant impaired that relationship on account of racial discrimination (such that, but
14 for race, plaintiff would not have suffered the loss of a legally protected right); and (4) plaintiff was
15 deprived of such services while similarly situated persons outside the protected class were not. *See*
16 *Comcast Corp. v. Nat’l Ass’n of African Am.-Owned Media*, 140 S. Ct. 1009, 1019 (2020); *Astre v.*
17 *McQuaid*, 804 Fed. App’x 665, 666-67 (Mar. 25, 2020); *Lindsey v. SLT Los Angeles, LLC*, 447
18 F.3d 1138, 1145 (9th Cir. 2006).

19 309. Plaintiff are African Americans and are members of the protected class under
20 section 1981.

21 310. Plaintiffs entered into binding and legally enforceable contracts with Defendants
22 including the TOS and related agreement(s) under California and controlling federal law.

23 311. The contractual relationship between each Plaintiff and Defendants was impaired
24 with respect to the TOS and each and every one of the related agreement(s) in at least five ways:

25 a. Defendants’ TOS and, any other agreements, under which they claim the
26 right to exercise “unfettered” discretion to impose content, use or services access restrictions based,
27 in any way, on Plaintiffs’ racial identity or viewpoint, violates and impairs the TOS, license
28 agreements, and other service agreement(s) on its face;

1 b. Defendants continue to breach the TOS and other agreement(s), by
2 exercising their contractual discretion to profile, filter, restrict, and block Plaintiffs’ content and
3 access to YouTube, based on Plaintiffs’ racial identity and viewpoint, in a manner that is not
4 permitted, but is expressly prohibited under California and federal law;

5 c. Defendants breached and continue to breach their express and implied
6 promises under the TOS and other related agreement(s) that, You Tube shall not profile, use, base,
7 or impose any restrictions on Plaintiffs’ content or access to YouTube based, in any way, on a
8 user’s racial identity or viewpoint, and only review, filter, and restrict Plaintiffs’ videos based on
9 on line video material that runs afoul of YouTube’s viewpoint neutral content based rules;

10 d. Defendants’ use of content filtering, review, restricting, and blocking tools
11 and procedures to profile and use Plaintiffs’ racial identity and viewpoint with respect to any
12 provision in the TOS or related agreements, impairs each and every one of Plaintiffs’ rights,
13 express or implied, that exist in the TOS or other related agreement(s) that Defendants entered into
14 with Plaintiffs; and

15 e. Defendants impaired their contractual relationship with each Plaintiff
16 because of Defendants’ intentional use of Plaintiffs’ racial identity or viewpoint to review, filter,
17 regulate, restrict, and block Plaintiffs’ videos and access to YouTube under the false pretext that the
18 material in the video was properly reviewed and found to violate one of YouTube’s content based
19 rules governing user content and access to the platform.

20 312. Defendants impaired their contractual relationship with each Plaintiff on account of
21 intentional racial discrimination. Despite their promises of neutrality and a diversity of viewpoints,
22 Defendants engage in a pattern and practice of intentional willful and malicious discrimination in
23 the provision of their services, including discriminating against and censoring of Plaintiffs’ speech,
24 based not upon the content of speech, but on their race. Through the acts complained of herein,
25 Defendants intentionally denied, and aided or incited in denying, Plaintiffs full and equal
26 accommodations, advantages, privileges, and services, by discriminating against them in
27 demonetizing Plaintiffs’ content and by placing their videos in “Restricted Mode.” But for their
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1 race, Plaintiffs would not have been subjected to Defendants' filtering or the denial of their
2 contractual benefits under the Agreements.

3 313. While Defendants have impaired and denied, and continue to impair and deny,
4 Plaintiffs' contractual benefits under the TOS and related agreement(s), similarly situated persons
5 who are not protected under the section 1981 protected class were not similarly treated, including
6 persons affiliated with or working for Defendants and/or their preferred users. Such persons are
7 not being racially profiled and are not subject to the same content or access filtering, restrictions, or
8 blocking despite material in their videos that violates YouTube's content based rules.

9 314. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' unlawful discriminatory actions,
10 Plaintiffs suffered, and continue to suffer, irreparable injury in fact, including, but not limited to:
11 lower viewership, lost advertising opportunities otherwise available to other nonprofits, decreased
12 ad revenue, and reputational damage, for which there exists no adequate remedy at law.

13 **SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION**
14 **FOR UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION**
15 **IN VIOLATION OF THE UNRUH CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**
16 **(On Behalf Of Each Plaintiff Individually And The Class)**

17 315. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference in whole or in part the allegations
18 alleged in paragraphs 1 through 314.

19 316. The elements of a claim for discrimination under the Unruh Civil Rights Act,
20 California Civil Code §§ 51, *et seq.* are: (1) Defendants denied, aided or incited a denial of full and
21 equal accommodations or services to Plaintiffs; (2) that a motivating reason for Defendants'
22 conduct was Plaintiffs' race or national origin; (3) that Plaintiffs were harmed and (4) that
23 Defendants' conduct was a substantial factor in causing that harm. *Nkwuo v. Metro PCS, Inc.*, No.
24 5:14-cv-05027-PSG, 2015 WL 4999978, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 21, 2015).

25 317. Defendants Google and YouTube host business establishment(s) that solicit, induce,
26 provide, and grant members of the public like Plaintiffs the right to access and use YouTube and its
27 services, subject only to viewpoint neutral content based rules that apply equally to all..

28 318. Defendants grant members of the public like Plaintiffs the right to use and access
YouTube for commercial reasons and consideration, including obtaining a perpetual and

1 irrevocable license to Plaintiffs’ and the other public users’ content and data, including the right to
2 appropriate that content and data for sale and other forms of monetization including advertising,
3 data information sales and services, and other revenue and profit stream on YouTube through
4 contract and business transactions including the TOs and related agreement(s).

5 319. A substantial motivating reason for Defendants’ conduct is Defendants’ use of the
6 racial identity, viewpoints, and other protected racial classifications under the law of Plaintiffs and
7 other persons similarly situated to impose restrictions on their video content.

8 320. Defendants’ conduct is the result of arbitrary, capricious, invidious, and pretext-
9 based discrimination against Plaintiffs’ political and religious identity and race, color and/or
10 national origin and viewpoints.

11 321. Defendants’ use of Plaintiffs’ racial or other identities to restrict their right to equal
12 access to YouTube is unlawful and fails to further any lawful, legitimate business interest,
13 including ensuring compliance with YouTube’s content based rules or protecting younger and
14 “sensitive” audiences.

15 322. Defendants have censored and treated, and continue to censor and treat, Plaintiffs
16 and their videos differently from Defendants’ own or preferred content, solely because of
17 discriminatory animus towards Plaintiffs’ identities and views.

18 323. Specifically, Defendants use AI, Algorithm, and other filtering machines,
19 procedures, and systems to knowingly and intentionally engage in and effectuate a pattern and
20 practice of discrimination for profit by reviewing, filtering, restricting, and blocking Plaintiffs’
21 content and access to YouTube based on Plaintiffs’ racial or other identity or viewpoints and other
22 traits or viewpoint that discriminate against Plaintiffs based on classifications that are protected
23 under the Unruh Act, namely race, color and/or national origin.

24 324. Defendants’ wrongful actions were knowing and intentional, taken with oppression,
25 fraud and/or malice, and effectuated through algorithms, machines, and human reviews that use
26 Plaintiffs’ racial identity and viewpoints, or other protected classifications to interfere with and
27 block Plaintiffs’ content and access on YouTube under the pretextual promise that everyone has
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1 equal access to YouTube subject only to viewpoint t neutral content based rules that apply equally
2 to all.

3 325. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants’ unlawful discriminatory actions,
4 Plaintiffs suffered, and continue to suffer, irreparable injury in fact, for which there is no complete
5 adequate remedy at law, including, but not limited harm and injury to contract based speech rights,
6 and lost financial and business opportunities including viewership, advertising, monetization, and
7 other opportunities and rights to gain popularity and revenues that are otherwise available to other
8 users who are not profiled and regulated on YouTube based on their racial identity or viewpoints.

9 326. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants’ discriminatory acts and practices,
10 Plaintiffs have also suffered monetary damages in an amount to be determined at trial.

11 327. Defendants’ violations of the Unruh Act further entitle Plaintiffs to recover statutory
12 damages of up to three times the amount of actual damages in an amount to be proven at trial, or a
13 minimum of \$4,000 per violation.

14 **SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**
15 **FOR FALSE ADVERTISING IN VIOLATION OF**
16 **THE LANHAM ACT, U.S.C. § 1125, et seq.**
(On Behalf Of Each Plaintiff Individually And The Class)

17 328. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference in whole or in part the allegations
18 alleged in paragraphs 1 through 327.

19 329. The elements of a false advertising claim under the Lanham Act, 47 U.S.C. § 1125,
20 *et seq.*, are: (1) false statement of fact by defendant in a commercial advertisement about its own or
21 another’s product; (2) the false statement actually deceived or has the tendency to deceive a
22 substantial segment of the YouTube consumers or users; (3) the false statement is material, in that
23 it is likely to influence the purchasing decision by a YouTube user; (4) the false statement entered
24 interstate commerce; and (5) Plaintiffs have been, and are likely, to be injured as a result of the
25 false statement. *Wells Fargo & Co. v. ABD Ins. & Fin. Servs., Inc.*, 758 F.3d 1069, 1071 (9th Cir.
26 2014).

27 330. Defendants’ statements that Plaintiffs or their videos are “Restricted” is false
28 because only videos that are reviewed and found to contain material that violates Plaintiffs’ content

1 based rules, including nudity, vulgarity, violence, hate, shocking or sexually explicit material are
2 can be “Restricted.” Plaintiffs’ videos do not contain such “Restricted Material.”

3 331. Defendants’ statements are further false because Defendants used Plaintiffs’ race,
4 identity or viewpoint to Restrict the video rather than any material that based on a review of the
5 video violated YouTube’s rules.

6 332. Defendants’ false statements are also “commercial advertising” because the
7 statements were made to penetrate the market of YouTube users and have the effect of limiting or
8 steering viewers away from Plaintiffs’ channels and videos, to video content, channels, or creators
9 who are sponsored by Defendants and for which or whom Defendants compete with Plaintiffs for
10 viewers, advertising, monetization, and other revenue streams on YouTube.

11 333. Defendants’ false statements are likely to deceive users and advertisers on YouTube
12 because the expressly and implicitly insinuate that there is something inappropriate, offensive,
13 improper, or prohibited under YouTube’s viewpoint neutral rules.

14 334. Defendants’ false statements are also material. They likely influence and affect a
15 user’s and/or advertiser’s viewing/purchasing decisions. Users and/or advertisers are likely
16 deceived that the video contains offensive material that violates YouTube’s rules after Defendants
17 reviewed the video for content violations under YouTube’s Community Guidelines, Age
18 Restrictions, and “Restricted Mode” prohibitions, when the basis for the restriction was Plaintiffs’
19 race, identity or viewpoint and was not undertaken in compliance with YouTube’s rules.

20 335. Defendants’ false statements not only influence but categorically control every user
21 or advertiser’s purchasing decisions because the statement results blocking of a user or advertisers
22 access to the video on YouTube and precludes the user or advertiser from ever accessing, viewing
23 and purchasing the video or purchasing and placing and ad for the video, or otherwise making any
24 purchasing decision contrary to that of Defendants.

25 336. Defendants’ false statements entered internet commerce and reached millions of
26 viewers who reside in all 50 States, U.S. Territories, and other users across the world.

27 337. Plaintiffs are and are likely to continue to be financially harmed by the false
28 statements, including losing substantial amounts revenues for viewer CPMs, advertising,

1 monetization, and other user or advertiser revenue streams on YouTube in an amount to be
2 determined at trial.

3 **EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION**
4 **FOR UNLAWFUL, DECEPTIVE, AND UNFAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES**
5 **CAL. BUS. & PROFS. CODE §17200, *et seq.***
6 **(On Behalf Of Each Plaintiff Individually And The Class)**

7 338. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference in whole or in part the allegations
8 alleged in paragraphs 1 through 337.

9 339. Defendants have committed acts of unfair competition, as defined by California
10 Business and Professions Code § 17200, by engaging in the practices described above.

11 340. Defendants’ profiling, filtering, restricting, and blocking Plaintiffs’ content and
12 access on YouTube based on Plaintiffs’ race, identity, or viewpoint is an unlawful business practice
13 under section 17200 because those practices, acts, and conduct violates 42 U.S.C. § 1981 and the
14 Unruh Civil Rights Act.

15 341. Defendants’ profiling, filtering, restricting, and blocking Plaintiffs’ content and
16 access on YouTube based on Plaintiffs’ race, identity, or viewpoint are also deceptive business acts
17 or practices as defined under section 17200 because they are based on intentionally false promises
18 by Defendants to Plaintiffs, and other users, and advertisers that YouTube only restricts or blocks
19 content or access based on violations of YouTube’s content based rules that apply equally to all. In
20 fact, Defendants have knowingly and intentionally use Plaintiffs’ racial or other identity or
21 viewpoint to block content and access to YouTube under the false pretext that the video was
22 reviewed like all videos on YouTube, including those sponsored by Defendants, and that the review
23 found that Plaintiffs’ videos actually contain material that violates YouTube’s viewpoint neutral
24 rules.

25 342. Defendants’ profiling, filtering, restricting, and blocking Plaintiffs’ content and
26 access on YouTube based on Plaintiffs’ race, identity, or viewpoint are also unfair business acts or
27 practices as defined under section 17200 because Defendants operate as both content review
28 curators and content sponsors on YouTube. This conflict is on full display when Defendants use
their “unfettered” authority to restrict or block Plaintiffs’ videos based on their race, identity, or

1 viewpoint but permit their own content or that of their preferred or sponsored content creators or
2 channels to go without review, restriction, or blocking even where the content violates YouTube's
3 content based rules.

4 343. This includes inserting metadata and other signals into Plaintiffs' videos that permit
5 Defendants to profile and restrict or block content without reviewing the video and results in
6 restrictions and blocking of Plaintiffs' content based on Defendants' embedding and creating the
7 metadata, signals, or other racial profiling content that results in the restriction or blocking.

8 344. There is no utility to the public for Defendants' actions, and the unlawful, deceptive
9 and unfair practices and conduct do not further a legitimate interest in protecting users from
10 offensive content.

11 345. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' unlawful, deceptive, and unfair
12 practices, conduct, and acts, Plaintiffs have suffered, and continue to suffer, immediate and
13 irreparable injury in fact, including lost income, reduced viewership, and damage to brand,
14 reputation, and goodwill, for which there exists no adequate remedy at law.

15 346. Furthermore, as a result of such practices, conduct, and acts, Defendants
16 misappropriate and are unjustly enriched by taking consideration in the form of property rights to
17 content and data, and revenue that belongs to Plaintiffs in an amount that exceeds \$5 million.

18 347. Plaintiffs are therefore entitled to restitution of that and other amounts, as well as
19 other equitable relief to be determined at trial.

20 348. At all times Defendants' wrongful actions were taken with oppression, fraud and/or
21 malice. Indeed, at least dating back to 2017, Defendants have admitted and known that they were
22 targeting users like Plaintiffs, based on their race, identity, or viewpoint, in violation of their
23 promises and rules not to discriminate based on race, or any other identity or viewpoint.

24 **NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION**
25 **FOR VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION ARTICLE I, SECTION 2**
26 **(On Behalf Of Each Plaintiff Individually And The Class)**

27 349. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate herein by reference, as though set forth in full,
28 each of the allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 348 above.

1 350. Article I, section 2 of the California Constitution enshrines the right to liberty of
2 speech: “Every person may freely speak, write and publish his or her sentiments on all subjects,
3 being responsible for the abuse of this right.” Cal. Const., art. I, § 2, subd. (a).

4 351. The Liberty of Speech Clause is broader and more protective than the federal First
5 Amendment. *Los Angeles Alliance for Survival v. City of Los Angeles*, 22 Cal.4th 352, 366-367
6 (2000).

7 352. The Liberty of Speech provision “grants broader rights to free expression than does
8 the First Amendment to the United States Constitution” because it enshrines the fundamental “idea
9 that private property can constitute a public forum for free speech if it is open to the public in a
10 manner similar to that of public streets and sidewalks.” *Fashion Valley Mall, LLC v. Nat’l Labor*
11 *Relations Bd.*, 42 Cal.4th 850, 857-58 (2007).

12 353. Under the California Constitution, a person’s Liberty of Speech enjoys full
13 constitutional protection when it occurs on any private property that is used or designated by the
14 owner or operator as a place similar to areas that have already been determined to be public forums.
15 That includes privately owned internet sites.

16 354. Consequently, the California Constitution protects the right to free speech on private
17 property even in cases when the federal Constitution may not.

18 355. The threshold element of a claim under the Liberty of Speech Clause is that the
19 defendant property owner has so opened up his or her property for public use as to make it the
20 functional equivalent of a traditional public forum based on three factors: (1) the nature, purpose,
21 and primary use of the property; (2) the extent and nature of the public invitation to use the
22 property; and (3) the relationship between the ideas sought to be presented and the purpose of the
23 property’s occupants.” *Albertson’s, Inc. v. Young*, 107 Cal. App. 4th 106, 119 (2003); 73 Op. Cal.
24 Atty. Gen. 213, 222– 223 (1990).

25 356. Defendants operate YouTube for the express purpose of inviting the public to use
26 the platform as a for profit “public forum” where the public is invited to engage in “freedom of
27 expression,” where everyone’s voice may be heard, subject only to viewpoint neutral rules that
28 apply equally to all and Defendants’ right to monetize and profit from the expression, speech, or

1 material that appears on YouTube through the property based license rights that the user must grant
2 Defendants as the price of admission to the forum.

3 357. According to Defendants, the purpose, use, nature, invitation to use the forum, and
4 relationship between that purpose and invitation, on the one hand, and the ideas sought to be
5 presented the public, on the other, is that Defendants offer public internet service “that enables
6 more than a billion users around the world to upload” videos, where users are urged to “Broadcast
7 Yourself,” “promote yourself” or “do the broadcasting yourself.”

8 358. Under the TOS, Defendants also represent that YouTube is open to everyone for
9 free expression and communication, regardless of race, identity, or viewpoint as long as the video
10 material complies with viewpoint neutral rules that apply equally to all.

11 359. Based on these and other representations, Defendants have induced or attracted 2.3
12 billion people to use YouTube and Defendants currently use the YouTube “public forum” control
13 and regulate 95% of the global public video content that has currently or has ever existed in the
14 world.

15 360. Under California law, Defendants’ regulation of speech on the YouTube platform is
16 state action because Defendants perform an exclusively and traditionally public function: the
17 regulation of 95% of the world’s public video based speech content by designating and operating
18 YouTube as a viewpoint neutral public forum for freedom of expression under California law.

19 361. Accordingly, Defendants are prohibited from arbitrarily, unreasonably, or
20 discriminatorily excluding, regulating, or restricting videos or user access to services on YouTube
21 on the basis of viewpoint or identity of the speaker. And any such exclusions, restrictions, or
22 regulations must comply with protections afforded Plaintiffs’ free speech and expression under the
23 Liberty of Speech Clause, and the established jurisprudence that such protections apply to private
24 parties who use their property for purposes similar to the use of a government owned and operated
25 public forum.

26 362. Plaintiffs’ video content and access services constitute expressive speech and
27 activity that is protected by Article I, section 2 of the California Constitution.

28

1 363. Defendants have filtered, restricted, blocked or interfered with Plaintiffs’ rights to
2 access, use, and express themselves on YouTube.

3 364. Defendants’ filtering, restricting, and blocking on Plaintiffs’ speech and expressive
4 conduct on YouTube violates Plaintiffs’ Liberty of Speech because they are not based on the
5 platform’s viewpoint neutral rules governing what content is and is not permissible, but on the race,
6 identity or viewpoint of Plaintiffs.

7 365. Defendants’ censorship and other speech regulation conduct harms and violates
8 Plaintiffs’ Liberty of Speech rights on YouTube in direct contravention of the procedural and
9 substantive rules that Defendants created, published, and use to regulate that speech on YouTube.

10 366. Furthermore Defendants’ rules, both as applied and on their face, are subjective,
11 vague, and overbroad criteria and proscription that Defendants use with unfettered and unbridled
12 discretion to censor speech for any reason, or no reason at all, no matter how arbitrary or capricious
13 in further violation of Plaintiffs’ Liberty of Speech rights.

14 367. Defendants also maliciously use and apply the rules as a pretext to censor and
15 restrict Plaintiffs’ speech for unlawful purposes including race and identity discrimination against
16 protected classes of users and to gain a competitive advantage over Plaintiffs and other users who
17 Defendants compete with in YouTube.

18 368. Defendants’ conduct, including the application of purportedly viewpoint neutral
19 rules, are arbitrary and capricious, and unlawfully restrains and harms Plaintiffs based upon racial,
20 political, religious, or other identity or viewpoint profiling the speaker, rather than the actual
21 content of the speakers words or expression. Defendants’ actions, therefore, also violate Plaintiffs’
22 right to free association and assembly under the Liberty of Speech Clause.

23 369. Defendants’ actions violate Plaintiffs’ right to free association and assembly because
24 , by blocking viewers’ access to videos and comments based on the identity or viewpoint of the
25 speakers or their opinions or other content featured in their videos that do not violate YouTube’s
26 viewpoint neutral content based rules

27 370. No compelling, significant, or legitimate reason justifies any or all of Defendants’
28 actions, including the purported interest claimed by Defendants for the need to protect minors or

1 sensitive audiences from offensive content because Plaintiffs’ content is not “offensive” or
2 otherwise violates Defendants’ purported viewpoint neutral rules.

3 371. And even if such interests did exist to justify Defendants’ restriction and
4 demonetization rules in theory, the conduct and restrictions imposed on Plaintiffs’ speech are
5 unconstitutional because they are not narrowly or reasonably tailored to further such interests, but
6 sweep within their ambit speech and expression that complies with the rules that Defendants use to
7 purportedly protect minors and sensitive audiences and are applied by Defendants with unfettered
8 power to censor speech based in race, identity, or viewpoint or for any other discriminatory or
9 unlawful reason or no reason at all.

10 372. Given Defendants’ monopolistic control over search results, on line advertising,
11 public video content, and the myriad of other information services that Defendants unilaterally
12 control, Plaintiffs have no alternative affording it a reasonable opportunity to reach their full
13 intended audience.

14 373. Defendants’ discriminatory policies and application of those policies are not
15 viewpoint-neutral, are unreasonable in time, place, and manner, and are unreasonable in relation to
16 the nature, purpose, and use of the forum, but are unreasonable prior restraints on Plaintiffs’
17 protected political speech, motivated by impermissible discrimination against Plaintiffs’ racial
18 identity and viewpoint.

19 374. Defendants’ intentional and wrongful actions were taken with oppression, fraud,
20 malice and/or are arbitrary and capricious, and as part of Defendants’ normal course of business,
21 effectuated through both algorithms, as well as through human agents. Additionally, Defendants’
22 actions were done knowingly and intentionally to deprive Plaintiffs and their viewers of their rights
23 under the California Constitution.

24 375. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants’ violations of clearly established law
25 regarding public fora, Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated have suffered, and continue
26 to suffer, immediate and irreparable injury in fact to their right to Liberty of Speech, including, but
27 not limited to financial harms of lost income, reduced viewership, and damage to brand, reputation,
28 and goodwill, for which there exists no adequately complete remedy at law.

1 a privately owned television channel available for as a forum for speech: “a private entity who
2 provides a forum for speech is not transformed by that fact alone into a state actor.” *Manhattan*
3 *Cnty. Access Corp. v. Halleck*, 139 S. Ct. 1921, 1930, 204 L. Ed. 2d 405 (2019).

4 383. In so doing, however, the Court in *Halleck* limited its 5-4 decision to the
5 circumstances of that case and declined to overrule prior cases in which a private party who
6 regulates speech or engages in conduct that is otherwise prohibited under the Constitution was
7 found to be a “state actor” who was subject to constitutional scrutiny.

8 384. Instead, the Court “stressed” that “very few” functions fall into that category of
9 “state action,” including, “for example, running elections and operating a company town. *Id.* at
10 1929, 204 (citing *Terry v. Adams*, 345 U.S. 461, 468–470, 73 S. Ct. 809, 97 L. Ed. 1152 (1953)
11 (elections); *Marsh v. Alabama*, 326 U.S. 501, 505–509, 66 S. Ct. 276, 90 L. Ed. 265 (1946)
12 (company town); *Smith v. Allwright*, 321 U.S. 649, 662–666, 64 S. Ct. 757, 88 L. Ed. 987 (1944)
13 (elections); *Nixon v. Condon*, 286 U.S. 73, 84–89, 52 S. Ct. 484, 76 L. Ed. 984 (1932) (elections).

14 385. The Court also stated that “a variety of functions do not fall into that category,
15 including, for example: running sports associations and leagues, administering insurance payments,
16 operating nursing homes, providing special education, representing indigent criminal defendants,
17 resolving private disputes, and supplying electricity.” *Id.* (citing *American Mfrs. Mut. Ins. Co. v.*
18 *Sullivan*, 526 U.S. 40, 55–57, 119 S. Ct. 977, 143 L.Ed.2d 130 (1999) (insurance payments);
19 *National Collegiate Athletic Assn. v. Tarkanian*, 488 U.S. 179, 197, n. 18, 109 S. Ct. 454, 102 L.
20 Ed.2d 469 (1988) (college sports); *San Francisco Arts & Athletics, Inc. v. United States Olympic*
21 *Comm.*, 483 U.S. 522, 544–545, 107 S. Ct. 2971, 97 L.Ed.2d 427 (1987) (amateur sports); *Blum*,
22 457 U.S. at 1011–1012, 102 S. Ct. 2777 (nursing home); *Rendell-Baker*, 457 U.S. at 842, 102 S. Ct.
23 2764 (special education); *Polk County v. Dodson*, 454 U.S. 312, 318–319, 102 S. Ct. 445, 70 L.
24 Ed.2d 509 (1981) (public defender); *Flagg Bros.*, 436 U.S. at 157–163, 98 S. Ct. 1729 (private
25 dispute resolution); *Jackson*, 419 U.S. at 352–354, 95 S. Ct. 449 (electric service).

26 386. Consequently, allegations that the relevant function in this case is only the operation
27 of public access channels on a cable system, is not a “function [that is] traditionally and exclusively
28 been performed by government to be establish “state action” under the Public Function Test. *Id.*

1 387. Beyond those statements, however, the Court in *Halleck* did not specify what the
2 pleading requirements are for establishing state action under one of the few “public functions” that
3 would trigger constitutional scrutiny. Nor was it presented with or had occasion to consider
4 whether the private parties conduct was undertaken under a government enacted law that permitted
5 unlawful conduct, including race discrimination, in contravention of fundamental constitutional
6 rights, so as to trigger a limited state action under the Permissive Endorsement Test set forth in
7 *Skinner v. Ry. Labor Executives' Ass'n*, 489 U.S. 602, 109 S. Ct. 1402, 1407, 103 L. Ed. 2d 639
8 (1989).

9 388. In *Prager University v. Google LLC*, the Ninth Circuit applied *Halleck* to hold that
10 YouTube does not “lose its private character merely because the public is generally invited to use it
11 for designated purposes” because “YouTube may be a paradigmatic public square on the Internet,
12 but it is ‘not transformed’ into a state actor solely by “provid[ing] a forum for speech.” *Prager*
13 *Univ. v. Google LLC*, 951 F.3d 991, 997 (9th Cir. 2020) (citing *Halleck*, 139 S. Ct. at 1930, 1934).

14 389. But like *Halleck*, *Prager* did not, nor could it, overrule or eliminate the Public
15 Function Test doctrine of state action nor did it specify what the pleading requirement were for
16 establishing one of “the few” functions that will trigger state action. And it appears that the
17 decision may be in conflict with *Halleck* and earlier cases when it held that public forum
18 designations are “not a matter of election by a private entity” and “[we] decline to subscribe to
19 Prager U’s novel opt-in theory of the First Amendment. *Id.* at 999 (9th Cir. 2020) (citing *Cent.*
20 *Hardware*, 407 U.S. at 547, 92 S. Ct. 2238 (holding only that “[b]efore an owner of private
21 property can be subjected to the commands of the First and Fourteenth Amendments the privately
22 owned property must assume to some significant degree the functional attributes of public property
23 devoted to public use”).

24 390. Furthermore, the Ninth Circuit did not mention, or consider in any manner, the more
25 limited theory of Permissive Endorsement “state action” based on Defendants’ use of Section
26 230(c), a congressional speech regulation law, to unlawfully restrict speech 95% of the world’s
27 video speech based on race discrimination and other protected identity classifications or
28

1 viewpoints that conflict with Plaintiffs’ fundamental equal protection and speech rights under the
2 Supreme Court’s seminal case in *Skinner*.

3 391. Consequently, no Court has ruled, nor could it, that Defendants can never engage,
4 under any circumstances, in “state action” that is subject to judicial scrutiny under the First
5 Amendment. Nor has the pleading standards and requirement for such a claim been established,
6 other than Defendants must be engaged in one of the few public functions identified in *Halleck* or
7 use a congressional statute to do what they could not otherwise do under established law:
8 discriminate against Plaintiffs’ speech based on their race, identity or viewpoint.

9 **B. Permissive Endorsement Allegations Of State Action**

10 392. In *Skinner*, private railroad companies were preparing to implement suspicion-based
11 breath and urine testing of their employees pursuant to recently enacted federal regulations referred
12 to in the case as “Subpart D.” *Skinner*, 489 U.S. at 611. Like Section 230(c)(2) of the CDA,
13 Subpart D was “permissive”; it did not compel the testing, but rather left the decision to the
14 railroads. *Id.* Crucially, however, again like Section 230(c)(2), Subpart D conferred state-law
15 immunity: it protected railroads from being sued under state law if they chose to test. *Skinner*, 489
16 U.S. at 611, 614-15 (Subpart D “pre-empt[ed] state laws, rules or regulations covering the same
17 subject matter” and thus “removed all legal barriers to the testing”). In so doing, a unanimous
18 Supreme Court held:

19 “[t]he fact that the Government has not compelled a private party to perform a
20 search does not, by itself, establish that the search is a private one. Here, specific
21 features of the regulations combine to convince us that the Government did more
22 than adopt a passive position toward the underlying private conduct.

23 *Id.* at 615.

24 393. Under *Skinner*, the elements of a state action claim under the Permissive
25 Endorsement Test are: (1) reliance on a government law that removes all laws and legal barriers to
26 private conduct that would otherwise unlawful and does so in a way that impacts a fundamental
27 constitutional right; (2) a defendant uses the law to engage in that unlawful conduct; and (3) the
28 government shares in the fruits or benefits in some way from the unlawful conduct.

1 394. Defendants rely on Section 230 to unlawfully discriminate against Plaintiffs and
2 regulate their speech based on race, identity, viewpoint or in some other manner that violates
3 federal or state law.

4 395. Defendants use Section 230(c) to pre-empt state law and obtain complete immunity
5 in a manner that removes all legal barriers to the regulating, blocking, or restricting of content
6 based on Plaintiffs’ race, identity, or viewpoint.

7 396. Plaintiffs are forced to submit to race discrimination and other violations of their
8 legal rights when they use YouTube.

9 397. The Communications Decency Act was, as the statute’s name indicates, enacted by
10 Congress to restrict access to “indecent” content on the Internet. 141 Cong. Rec. S8330 (daily ed.
11 June 14, 1995) (statement of Sen. Exon).

12 398. The express purpose of Section 230(c)(2) is to encourage Internet platforms like
13 Google and YouTube to “restrict” “obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing,
14 or otherwise objectionable” material. 47 U.S.C. § 230(c)(2).

15 399. “The intent of Congress in enacting § 230(c)(2) was *to encourage efforts by Internet*
16 *service providers to eliminate such material.*” *Goddard v. Google*, No. C 08-2738 JF (PVT), 2008
17 WL 5245490, at *6 (N.D. Cal. Dec. 17, 2008) (emphasis added).

18 400. Section 230(c) makes clear Congress’ “strong preference” for regulating on line
19 speech based on race, identity or viewpoint and for allowing Defendants to discriminate against
20 Plaintiffs in violation of established federal and state law.

21 401. The federal government has also made clear its “desire to share the fruits” of the
22 unlawful and discriminatory conduct undertaken by Defendants with respect to regulating on line
23 speech, law enforcement, information gathering, and other government services.

24 402. By way of one example only, in the six-month period from January to June 2017,
25 when Defendants first admitted that they were knowingly and intentionally profiling and targeting
26 users based on race, identity, and viewpoint, Google received almost 17,000 requests from U.S. law
27 enforcement to turn over information regarding users’ content and searches. *See Cooperation or*
28

1 *Resistance?: The Role of Tech Companies in Government Surveillance*, 131 Harv. L. Rev. 1722,
2 1722 (2018). Google provided information to the government in some 80% of those cases.

3 403. Under Section 230(c), Congress allows and affirmatively endorses the unlawful
4 discrimination and other conduct by Defendants.

5 404. Defendants' use of Section 230(c) to engage in discrimination and other unlawful
6 conduct under state and federal law to regulate on line "material" on the internet is government
7 endorsed of the unlawful conduct and renders that conduct "state action" under *Skinner* and the
8 Permissive Endorsement Test.

9 **C. State Action Allegations Under The Public Function Test**

10 405. Under *Halleck* and *Prager*, the elements of state action under the Public Function
11 Test appear to be: (1) Defendants are engaged in functions and conduct that fall into that
12 categories of "state action" that includes, but is not limited to, "running elections and operating a
13 company town."

14 406. On or about December 2019, Defendants merged their different TOS into a single
15 contract whereby Defendants' discretion to find a violation YouTube's content based rules can be
16 used by Defendants to bar the user from using any or all services offered by Defendants in any way
17 including, the purchase and use of hand held smart phone, email, search engines, applications, and
18 information or other services that are essential for public health, safety, law enforcement, election
19 administration, taxation, and any other service performed by governments.

20 407. Defendants also operate a "company town" in which they control essential
21 information and communication services without which local, state, or federal government agencies
22 cannot provide or otherwise administer essential services including elections.

23 408. Until, if ever, the Supreme Court eliminates the Public Function Test for "state
24 action" in all cases as a matter of law, Defendants' use and regulation of speech and information
25 services on YouTube involves the "very few" functions that satisfy the Public Function Test for
26 "state action."
27
28

1 **D. Defendants' Conduct Violates The First Amendment**

2 409. Defendants continue to filter, restrict, block and/or interfere with Plaintiffs' rights to
3 access, use, and express themselves on YouTube.

4 410. Defendants' filtering, restricting, and blocking on Plaintiffs' speech and expressive
5 conduct on YouTube violates Plaintiffs' First Amendment rights because the conduct is not based
6 on the platform's viewpoint neutral rules governing what content is and is not permissible, but on
7 the race, identity or viewpoint of Plaintiffs.

8 411. Defendants' censorship and other speech regulation conduct harms and violates
9 Plaintiffs' speech rights on YouTube in direct contravention of the procedural and substantive
10 viewpoint neutral content based rules that Defendants created, published, and use to regulate
11 speech on YouTube.

12 412. Furthermore Defendants' rules, both as applied and on their face, are subjective,
13 vague, and overbroad criteria and proscription that Defendants use with unfettered and unbridled
14 discretion to censor speech for any reason, or no reason at all, no matter how arbitrary or capricious
15 in further violation of Plaintiffs' First Amendment Rights.

16 413. Defendants also maliciously use and apply the Rules as a pretext to censor and
17 restrict Plaintiffs' speech for unlawful purposes including race and identity discrimination against
18 protected classes of users and to gain a competitive advantage over Plaintiffs and other users who
19 Defendants compete with in YouTube.

20 414. Defendants' conduct, including the application of purportedly viewpoint neutral
21 rules, are arbitrary and capricious, and unlawfully restrains and harms Plaintiffs and all other
22 persons similarly situated, based upon racial, political, religious, or other identity or viewpoint
23 profiling of the speaker, rather than the actual content of the speaker's words or expression.
24 Defendants' actions, therefore, also violate Plaintiffs' right to free association and assembly under
25 the First Amendment.

26 415. Defendants' actions violate Plaintiffs' right to free association and assembly because
27 , by blocking viewers' access to videos and comments based on the identity or viewpoint of the
28

1 speakers or their opinions or other content featured in their videos that do not violate YouTube's
2 viewpoint neutral content based rules

3 416. No compelling, significant, or legitimate reason justifies any or all of Defendants'
4 actions, including the purported interest claimed by Defendants for the need to protect minors or
5 sensitive audiences from offensive content because Plaintiffs' content is not "offensive" or
6 otherwise violates Defendants' purported viewpoint neutral rules.

7 417. And even if such interests did exist to justify Defendants' restriction and
8 demonetization rules in theory, the conduct and restrictions imposed on Plaintiffs' speech are
9 unconstitutional because they are not narrowly or reasonably tailored to further such interests, but
10 sweep within their ambit speech and expression that complies with the rules that Defendants use to
11 purportedly protect minors and sensitive audiences and are applied by Defendants with unfettered
12 power to censor speech based in race, identity, or viewpoint or for any other discriminatory or
13 unlawful reason or no reason at all.

14 418. Given Defendants' monopolistic control over search results, online advertising,
15 public video content, and the myriad of other information services that Defendants unilaterally
16 control, Plaintiffs have no alternative affording them a reasonable opportunity to reach their full
17 intended audience.

18 419. Defendants' discriminatory policies and application of those policies are not
19 viewpoint-neutral, are unreasonable in time, place, and manner, and are unreasonable in relation to
20 the nature, purpose, and use of the forum, but are unreasonable prior restraints on Plaintiffs'
21 protected political speech, motivated by impermissible discrimination against Plaintiffs' identity
22 and viewpoint.

23 420. Defendants' intentional and wrongful actions were taken with oppression, fraud,
24 malice and/or are arbitrary and capricious, and as part of Defendants' normal course of business,
25 effectuated through both algorithms, as well as through human agents. Defendants' actions were
26 done knowingly and intentionally to deprive Plaintiffs and their viewers of their rights under the
27 California Constitution.

28

1 421. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants’ violations of clearly established law
2 regarding constitutional speech regulation on YouTube, Plaintiffs have suffered, and continue to
3 suffer, immediate and irreparable injury in fact to their right to Liberty of Speech, including, but
4 not limited to financial harms of lost income, reduced viewership, and damage to brand, reputation,
5 and goodwill, for which there exists no adequately complete remedy at law.

6 **VII. PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

7 Wherefore Plaintiffs and all other persons similarly situated request that the Court grant the
8 following relief:

9 1. A declaratory judgment remedy under 28 U.S.C. § 2201, et seq. for Plaintiffs’ First
10 Cause of Action challenging the construction, application, and constitutionality of Section 230(c)
11 of the Communications Decency Act, 47 USC § 230(c), that Section 230(c) does not grant
12 immunity to Defendants, or otherwise apply to claims and allegations that arise from, relate to, or
13 are based on, Defendants Google/YouTube’s unlawful racial profiling and use of the user’s race, or
14 other identity or viewpoint to filter, restrict, or block content, or otherwise deny Plaintiffs’ access
15 or use of any services offered by Google/YouTube in connection with Plaintiffs’ use of YouTube
16 on the grounds that:

17 a. The plain language of sections 230(c)(1) and/or (2) only immunizes and ISP
18 for filtering and blocking “offensive material,” and does not immunize the regulating, restricting or
19 blocking of material based on the racial, or other identity or viewpoint of the user posting or
20 viewing the video;

21 b. Sections 230(c)(1) or (c)(2) does not immunize an ISP who engages in race
22 based identity or viewpoint discrimination under contracts and other business conduct that violates
23 42 U.S.C. § 1981 or the Unruh Civil Rights Act;

24 c. The application of Section 230(c) in any way to permit and immunize race,
25 sex, or other identity or viewpoint based profiling and regulation of content and access on YouTube
26 is unconstitutional and violates the First Amendment under Denver Area 518 U.S. 727, 766-67;
27 and/or

28

1 d. The President’s Executive Order date May 28, 2020, prohibits the
2 application of Section 230(c) immunity to the content and access filtering, restricting, and blocking
3 decisions and requires the Department of Justice to clarify and enforce the law in accordance with
4 identity and viewpoint neutrality.

5 2. A declaratory judgment remedy under section 2201 that Defendants have violated
6 and continue to violate Plaintiffs’ rights to free speech and expression subject only to viewpoint
7 neutral content based rules that apply equally to all under Plaintiffs Second through Sixth, and
8 Eighth through Tenth Causes of Action;

9 3. An injunction requiring Defendants to:

10 a. Cease and desist from capriciously restricting, demonetizing, or otherwise
11 censoring any content of videos uploaded to the YouTube based on Plaintiffs’ race, or other
12 identity or viewpoint in violation of federal and California law; and

13 b. Cease and desist from censoring, restricting, restraining, or regulating speech
14 based on the discretionary use or application of discriminatory, animus-based, arbitrary, capricious,
15 vague, unspecified, or subjective criteria, rules, guidelines, and/or practices;

16 4. Compensatory, special, and statutory damages in an amount to be proven at trial,
17 including statutory damages pursuant to, *inter alia*, Civil Code § 51, 51.5, 52, Civil Procedure Code
18 § 1021.5, 15 U.S.C. § 1117, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1981, 1983;

19 5. A civil penalty of \$2,500 for each violation pursuant to Business and Professions
20 Code §§ 17200, 17206, and 17536;

21 6. Punitive damages and exemplary damages in an amount to be proven at trial;

22 7. Restitution of financial losses or harm caused by Defendants’ conduct and ill-gotten
23 gains, and disgorgement of profit obtained from all unlawful conduct in an amount to be proven at
24 trial;

25 8. Attorneys’ fees and costs of suit;

26 9. Prejudgment and post-judgment interest; and

27 10. Any and all other relief that the Court deems just and proper.

28

Exhibit “A”

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10 BriaAndChrissy LLC, Bria Kam, Chrissy
Chambers, Chase Ross, Brett Somers, and
11 Lindsay Amer, Stephanie Frosch, Sal
Cinquemani, Tamara Johnson and Greg Scarnici
12

13 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

14 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, SAN JOSE DIVISION

15 DIVINO GROUP LLC, a California limited
liability company, CHRIS KNIGHT, an
16 individual, CELSO DULAY, an individual,
CAMERON STIEHL, an individual,
17 BRIAANDCHRISSY LLC, a Georgia limited
liability company, BRIA KAM, an individual,
18 CHRISSY CHAMBERS, an individual,
CHASE ROSS, an individual, BRETT
19 SOMERS, an individual, and LINDSAY
AMER, an individual, STEPHANIE
20 FROSCH, an individual, SAL
CINEQUEMANI, an individual, TAMARA
21 JOHNSON, an individual, and GREG
SCARNICI, an individual,

22 Plaintiffs,

23 vs.

24 GOOGLE LLC, a Delaware limited liability
company, YOUTUBE, LLC, a Delaware
25 limited liability company, and DOES 1-25,

26 Defendants.
27
28

Case No. 5:19-cv-004749-VKD

**DECLARATION OF STEPHANIE
FROSCH IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS'
MOTION FOR LEAVE TO FILE SUR-
REPLY BRIEF AND REQUEST FOR
HEARING AND CASE MANAGEMENT
CONFERENCE**

*(Filed concurrently with Plaintiffs' Sur-Reply
Brief; Declaration of Peter Obstler)*

Date:
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Place: Courtroom 2
Before: Magistrate Judge Virginia DeMarchi

1 I, Stephanie Frosch, declare:

2 1. I am a named Plaintiff in the above-captioned action. I have firsthand, personal
3 knowledge of the facts set forth below and if called as a witness could competently testify thereto,
4 unless other specified.

5 2. I am an LGBTQ internet content creator and YouTube user who is active in the
6 YouTube Community.

7 3. In 2009, I became a YouTube content creator and now operate two YouTube
8 channels: Youtube.com/ElloSteph and Youtube.com/StephFrosch.

9 4. From 2009 through 2016, my YouTube channels were successful. However, in
10 2017, I started having problems with YouTube:

11 a. YouTube was classifying many of my videos as subject to Restricted Mode,
12 making them unavailable to a large number of viewers, even though the videos contained no
13 nudity, profanity, sexual conduct, or discussions of sexual activities. YouTube also allowed other
14 YouTube channels to copy my videos without permission, and the content in those videos was re-
15 posted by another user and was not subjected to Restricted Mode. .

16 b. Many of my videos were demonetized or subject to reduced monetization
17 despite the fact that they do not include graphic images of violence or sexuality, nudity, profanity,
18 sexual conduct, or discussions of sexual activities.

19 c. YouTube was running ads on channels which were posting copies of my
20 videos without permission.

21 d. At least one of the customized thumbnail images I crafted for each of my
22 videos uploaded to my channels was removed.

23 e. Longtime subscribers to my channels were being dropped from my
24 channels, and YouTube was preventing them from re-subscribing. As a result, my subscribers
25 were not receiving notices when I posted new content.

26 5. YouTube no longer allows me to see the revenue I generated before October 2009.
27 My best recollection is that I earned approximately \$23,000 from YouTube ad revenue in 2009. In
28 addition to ad revenue, I earn money from the sale of merchandise, from separate brand

1 sponsorship agreements connected with videos posted on my channels, and from the sale of
2 merchandise from the website www.districtlines.com/ellosteph. This is a separate website which
3 sells merchandise relating to my original videos posted to YouTube.

4 6. In 2017, I joined with other LGBTQ+ YouTube creators to publicly raise
5 awareness about issues and concerns regarding Defendants’ discriminatory treatment of LGBTQ+
6 channels. Among other issues, I expressly raised the concern that changes to YouTube’s
7 algorithms and other content curation machine based procedures were disproportionately
8 restricting and affecting access to and the reach of content, as well as affecting other YouTube
9 services for LGBTQ+ YouTube creators and viewers who are members of what Defendants call
10 the “YouTube Community.”

11 7. On September 8, 2017, an LGBTQ+ YouTube content creator forwarded to me an
12 email dated August 25, 2017, from Laura Chernikoff of the “Internet Creators Guild” inviting him
13 to an event co-sponsored by YouTube regarding changes to YouTube’s algorithm which were
14 adversely affecting the LGBTQ+ community.

15 Ms. Chernikoff’s invitation stated:

16 You're invited to an upcoming event put on by the Internet Creators Guild, in
17 partnership with YouTube on Thursday, September 14th at 11:00 AM.

18 Following the advertising situation on YouTube this spring (dubbed the
19 "Adpocalypse"), YouTube is interested in hearing about creators' experiences on
20 the platform. In particular, it's important for creators to understand the advertising
21 guidelines and tools that brands interact with, in order to be aware how it may
22 affect your monetization.

23 We’ve been discussing this issue with YouTube, who have been working to address
24 creator concerns on this topic. They would like to share this presentation, which
25 will be under NDA, in order to hear from ICG Members and creators we’re in
26 touch with as part of a small focus group.

27 We thought you would be an engaged and thoughtful participant and hope you’re
28 able to attend.

Attached as Exhibit 1 is a true and correct copy of the email I received with the invitation to the
September 14-event. Based on the email, I understood that *before* YouTube would even speak to
me or any other members of the group of LGBTQ+ creators about the problems with the new
YouTube algorithm implemented in May of 2017, *YouTube required each of us to sign a Non-*

1 **Disclosure Agreement** (the “NDA”).

2 8. Ms. Chernikoff sent an email to me dated September 11, 2017 which confirms my
3 participation in the September 14-event and states: “Please note that a non-disclosure agreement
4 (NDA) will be sent via email by a member of the YouTube team and is required to be signed prior
5 to the event, so keep an eye out!” Attached as Exhibit 2 is a true and correct copy of the email
6 dated September 11, 2017 from Ms. Chernikoff.

7 9. On September 13, 2017, Defendants sent to me by email a request for my signature
8 on an electronic Non-Disclosure Agreement in connection with the September 14-event. Upon
9 signing the electronic document, I received a confirmation email which has a subject: “You have
10 accepted Google’s Non-Disclosure Agreement.” The text of the email sets forth my personal
11 information and a copy of the Non-Disclosure Agreement. Attached as Exhibit 3 is a true and
12 correct copy of the email from Google confirming receipt of my signed Non-Disclosure
13 Agreement.

14 10. The Non-Disclosure Agreement states:

15 “In order to evaluate and possibly enter into a business transaction (the “Purpose”),
16 Google Inc., for itself and its subsidiaries and affiliates, and the other party
 identified below hereby agree:”

17 At the time that I signed the agreement, I had no idea what “business transaction” the document
18 was referring to. As a YouTube user, I had previously entered into a YouTube Terms of Service
19 Agreement and an AdSense Agreement. As of September 13, 2017, I was not thinking about
20 entering into any new “business transaction” with YouTube or Google, or changing the existing
21 agreements I had with YouTube and AdSense. Neither YouTube nor Google had mentioned any
22 new business transaction, or changes to any existing agreements. I was merely trying to meet with
23 YouTube representatives to discuss with them the many problems that I had been having with my
24 YouTube channel and the falling views and revenue I was experiencing as a result of changes
25 YouTube made to their algorithm in May of 2017. I did not expect for YouTube or Google to
26 give me trade secrets, computer codes, or any other proprietary information at the meeting. And
27 they did not. I simply talked to YouTube and/or Google about my problems and how to resolve
28 them.

1 11. The Non-Disclosure Agreement does not define what “Confidential Information”
2 is, except to say that it is whatever “the Discloser considers” to be “confidential.” I have no way
3 of knowing what YouTube or Google consider to be confidential, or expect me to treat as
4 confidential. “Confidential Information” is not limited to trade secrets such as YouTube or
5 Google’s customer lists, computer codes, or processes.

6 12. On September 14, 2017, I went to the event at the YouTube Playa Vista Office in
7 Los Angeles, California. Upon arrival at the September 14-event, I checked in at 11:00 a.m.
8 YouTube provided lunch for the participants. Around 11:30, a YouTube representative announced
9 that the YouTube analytics guy had limited time and was running late. The YouTube
10 representative asked us to quickly sign a hard copy Non-Disclosure Agreement so that we could
11 get started as fast as possible, and indicated that we had to move quickly so that there was time
12 with the analytics representative. The representative then came up to me, handed me a hard copy
13 Non-Disclosure Agreement, and asked me to sign it while he stood there waiting. I was not given
14 time to read the document which had multiple pages and appeared to be longer and more detailed
15 than the one I had signed online. The representative then took my signed document, and quickly
16 approached another creator requesting their signature. YouTube did not offer me a copy of this
17 Non-Disclosure Agreement. Immediately after signing the document, I was ushered into a large
18 conference room.

19 13. The September 14 event involved 12 to 20. YouTube creators, each representing a
20 different class of video. While I was the only LGBTQ representative creator, there were other
21 LGBTQ creators who were posting videos in other categories. I recall there were individual
22 representatives for cooking, comedy, and gaming videos, some of which happened to identify as
23 LGBTQ although they were not specifically creating videos for the LGBTQ community. We were
24 seated at a large oval conference table, and offered notebooks and pens. The presenters all
25 identified as YouTube employees.

26 14. During the September 14 event, we watched a PowerPoint presentation. We heard
27 from a man who identified himself as the YouTube employee responsible for analytics and a
28 woman who addressed algorithm issues. Also present were Ben Cramer and someone who was

1 handing out YouTube swag. In all, I recall that there were five YouTube representatives present at
2 the event, in addition to the man who got me to sign the second Non-Disclosure Agreement before
3 I entered the conference room for the presentation. YouTube specifically prohibited us from
4 taking photos or recording the event.

5 15. The YouTube presenters stated that they wanted to work with us creators, and
6 explained that YouTube makes money off of the creators who make the video content from
7 advertisers, and that creators win by sharing in the advertising money. They explained that
8 advertisers buy ads based on viewer demographics for the videos. YouTube and creators monetize
9 off of each other and YouTube does not want to hurt creators. The YouTube presenters discussed
10 problems with filtering video content for purposes of restricted mode, monetization and the
11 payments for cpm (clicks per minute).

12 16. When asked why videos which use gay couples are getting blocked as mature
13 content or inappropriate for all audiences, or videos are getting blocked for mentioning the word
14 “queer,” the YouTube representative made the following statements:

15 a. Blocking LGBTQ videos was caused when YouTube started using an
16 artificial intelligence algorithm to filter content based on what advertisers want; it is the algorithm
17 that is “targeting” LGBTQ videos. YouTube was not discriminating, the algorithm was
18 discriminating. The YouTube representative was talking about the algorithm as if it were some
19 independent video censor that was entirely unrelated to YouTube and its employees, and beyond
20 their control; rather than a tool which YouTube specifically designed and put in place to regulate
21 videos on the platform, which YouTube could change or remove from the platform entirely.

22 b. There are too many videos on YouTube to review all content manually.
23 YouTube must use artificial intelligence to conduct the content reviews on the YouTube platform.

24 c. The artificial intelligence algorithm identifies people, including the racial or
25 sexual identities or viewpoints of the creator or viewers when filtering and curating content and
26 restricting access to YouTube services; it does not review and make restrictions based only on the
27 video content. This is due in part to the fact that advertisers want to be able to target audiences
28 based on the demographics of the creators and their audiences. The result is that the algorithm

1 discriminates based on the identity of the creator or its intended audience when making what are
2 supposed to be neutral content based regulations and restrictions for videos that run on YouTube.

3 d. Despite the problems with the algorithm, YouTube and the creators are on
4 the “same side.” The rules should apply equally to all regardless of the identity or viewpoint of
5 the creator.

6 e. When the creators told YouTube representatives that they understood why
7 an advertiser would not want a Pampers ad on video content featuring guns, they still did not
8 understand why content from homosexual creators was being demonetized when identical content
9 from heterosexual creators was not, the YouTube representatives said that they were “going to fix
10 it.” No details of what they were doing, or planned on doing to fix the algorithm were provided
11 and no one (at the meeting or since) indicated when, if ever, the fix for this “problem” would be
12 completed.

13 f. In response to further questions from creators, the YouTube representatives
14 specifically acknowledged that the algorithm was looking at and profiling the sexual identities,
15 races, disabilities, religious and political affiliations of creators, intended audiences and viewers
16 alike.

17 17. The YouTube representatives discussed the example of a YouTube creator who had
18 a chef’s channel and posted cooking videos: if the creator identified as gay, or had a lot of
19 subscribers or viewers who accessed a lot of LGBTQ related videos, the cooking video would be
20 tagged as a “gay” video for monetization and restricted mode purposes, regardless of the actual
21 content of the video.

22 18. Towards the end of the September 14-event, which lasted about 2 hours, I
23 specifically asked the YouTube representative, “What are you doing to fix the problems we have
24 identified?” and “When will you be done fixing the problems?” The YouTube representative
25 responded to each question saying, “I cannot answer that question.” To this date, no one at the
26 September 14 event has ever provided me any substantive response to my questions regarding the
27 problems or the fix.

28 19. As far as I can recall, no one at the September 14-event -- (a) said that what they

1 were saying was “confidential” in connection with either the online or hard copy Non-Disclosure
2 Agreements; (b) said that what they were talking about was a “trade secret;” (c) described actual
3 YouTube’s computer code or proprietary processes used in connection with YouTube, the
4 analytics, the algorithm, or AdSense; (d) asked me not to repeat anything that was said during the
5 event by other creators.

6 20. Until the time that Defendants finally released me from my NDAs in March of this
7 year, I was prohibited by the NDAs from discussing, with anyone, including my attorneys in this
8 case, the substance, nature, and details of the September 14-event, including the statements made
9 by the YouTube representatives about identity and viewpoint discrimination in regulating
10 monetization, access to content and services. Consequently, the information and statements
11 presented at the September 14-event could not be included in the Second Amended Complaint.
12 Even though I have no idea what, if anything Defendants claim is “confidential,” I was afraid and
13 at risk that if I ever talked about what was said at the meeting, YouTube could or would sue me
14 for violating the NDA(s). I have also been afraid that Defendants would suspend or terminate my
15 channel, my gmail account, or even suspend my access to Google searches if I violated the
16 NDA(s).

17 21. On March 26, 2020, after my lawyers had notified YouTube that I had decided to
18 file a motion to void or release me from the gag provisions of the NDAs, Defendants informed my
19 lawyers in writing that they had “no intention of enforcing the NDA.” Attached as Exhibit 4 is a
20 true and correct copy of the correspondence between my lawyers and Defendants’ attorneys,
21 including the email releasing me from the NDAs.

22 22. Following the receipt of that email, I was finally able to inform my lawyers of the
23 substance of what was said by the YouTube representatives at the September 14-event.

24 23. I have reviewed the Defendants’ Motion to Dismiss the Second Amended
25 Complaint. In the Motion to Dismiss, Defendants make a number of factual assertions which are
26 loosely based on allegations in the Complaint. As stated below, I believe that Defendants’ factual
27 assertions are either wrong or misleading, as indicated below:

28 a. Defendants state in their Motion:

1 Content creators upload videos to the service free of charge, enabling YouTube’s
2 billions of users to view them, comment on them, and subscribe to their favorite
creators’ channels. ¶ 52. MTD at 3:2-4.

3 In truth, while there is no monetary charge for uploading videos, in exchange for the
4 opportunity to use the YouTube website, Defendants required me to give them a license to use all
5 of my original video content that is posted to the YouTube website, the right to collect data about
6 me, and my use of the YouTube website, and also the right to collect data about people who view
7 my videos on the YouTube website.

8 b. Defendants state in their Motion:

9 YouTube values the perspectives and experiences that LGBTQ+ content creators
10 bring to the platform. MTD at 3:17-18.

11 My experience with YouTube since 2017 is directly contrary to this statement. After the
12 September 14-event, no one at YouTube followed up with me – no one checked to see if my
13 problems had been resolved; no one checked to see how much the algorithm had cost me in lost
14 subscribers, advertising revenue, cpm, or reduced viewers. In fact, no one from YouTube ever
15 helped me solve the problems identified at the September 14-event. Rather, following the event,
16 my subscribers, advertising revenues, cpm, and viewers continued to decline. Though my
17 viewership was stable, AdSense revenues dropped substantially.

18 24. Since filing the lawsuit, YouTube shut off the analytics for the cpm so that creators
19 like me are no longer able to calculate the lost revenue from reduced cpm due to demonetization.
20 My viewer numbers have been cut dramatically and subscribers complain that they cannot get new
21 video notices. Recently, I co-created a video with my girlfriend, who does not identify as
22 LGBTQ. We both posted the same identical video at the same time. While my girlfriend earned
23 \$3,000 from the video, I earned only \$300.

24 a. Defendants state in their Motion:

25 In 2017, when LGBTQ+ creators raised issues about Restricted Mode, YouTube
26 acknowledged that the feature was not fully working as intended and agreed to
make improvements. ¶¶ 28, 87. MTD at 3:21-4:1.

27 Defendants’ description of YouTube’s “acknowledgment” is misleading. Contrary to the
28 Motion’s spin on the allegations in the Complaint, the concerns I and other LGBTQ+ creators

1 raised were not limited to Restricted Mode, but extended to demonetization and cpm. In fact, at
2 the September 14-event, YouTube’s representatives acknowledged that the algorithm was
3 discriminating against LGBTQ creators as well as other creators based on their identities and
4 personal affiliations, as well as those of their subscribers and viewers. YouTube’s representatives
5 also stated that the feature was working as YouTube intended: it was profiling creators and
6 viewers for YouTube’s advertisers so that the advertisers could target audiences based on personal
7 identity including whether viewers were gay, disabled, members of a racial group or affiliated with
8 specific viewpoints or groups. YouTube’s representatives confirmed that decisions regarding a
9 video’s status vis a vis restricted mode, monetization and cpm were being made on grounds that
10 were unrelated to the actual content of the video. While the YouTube representatives agreed that
11 they were working to fix the problems, they did not specify what they were doing to stop the
12 discrimination in the interim or to otherwise provide a timeframe for completing the fix.

13 b. Defendants state in their Motion:

14 As for the Plaintiffs here, YouTube has addressed their individual concerns in good
15 faith, and often removed restrictions from their videos, when appropriate under
16 YouTube’s policies, in response to their appeals. ¶¶ 186, 223, 227, 230, 233, 236.a.
17 MTD at 4:1-4.

18 Defendants’ statement is grossly misleading to the extent that it suggests that YouTube
19 actually resolved any of the complaints I (or any other LGBTQ+ creator) raised at the 2017
20 meeting with the Defendants. YouTube has not “addressed” my concerns, continues to profile
21 my videos based on my identity as a member of the LGBTQ community and my affiliation with
22 LGBTQ groups and has increased its discrimination against me by restricting the majority of my
23 videos, and gutting my subscriber lists, viewers, ad revenue, and cpm.

24 c. Defendants state in their Motion:

25 The use of its service is governed by rules and an array of content policies. ¶¶ 10,
26 248, 288. Before creating channels and uploading their content to the service,
27 Plaintiffs acknowledge they agreed to YouTube’s Terms of Service and the
28 incorporated Community Guidelines. ¶¶ 10, 14, 59, 248,

29 The Terms of Service provide that “YouTube reserves the right to remove Content
30 without prior notice,” including videos uploaded by content creators. Ex. 2-3. The
31 Community Guidelines are twelve “common-sense rules” prohibiting certain kinds
32 of content, including “[n]udity or sexual content” and “[v]ulgar language.” Exs. 3-
33 4. Google and YouTube reserve the right to remove any content that they believe to

1 be contrary to the Terms of Service and the incorporated Community Guidelines.
2 Ex. 2. MTD at 4:6-15.

3 YouTube allows content creators whose channels meet certain minimum
4 viewership requirements to earn revenue from (or “monetize”) their videos by
5 running advertisements with them as part of the YouTube Partner Program. To be
6 eligible to monetize their videos, in addition to the Terms of Service and
7 Community Guidelines discussed above, Plaintiffs agreed to certain additional
8 “written contracts,” including YouTube’s Partner Program Terms and the AdSense
9 Terms of Service. See ¶ 331; Exs. 5-6, 10. In addition, Plaintiffs agreed to comply
10 with YouTube’s monetization policies, including the Advertiser-friendly content
11 guidelines, which are designed to ensure that ads do not appear alongside videos
12 with content that certain audiences might find objectionable. See ¶¶ 152, 248, 331;
13 Exs. 5-11. YouTube uses automated software to identify content as inappropriate
14 for advertising, and creators may appeal demonetization decisions for manual
15 review. ¶ 94; Ex. 9. MTD at 5:9-19.

16 Defendants’ description of the website rules is misleading and deceptive: When I agreed
17 to Defendants’ Terms of Service, Community Guidelines, Partnership Program Terms, and
18 AdSense Terms of Service, I understood that these terms were nonnegotiable and that each
19 YouTube user was agreeing to these same terms. YouTube stated in its Terms of Service and
20 Community Guidelines that the rules to which I agreed would be applied equally to all YouTube
21 users, in a neutral manner. At the September 14-event, YouTube representatives reaffirmed their
22 commitment to the universal set of rules which apply equally to all; however, they also confirmed
23 that they were using an artificial intelligence algorithm which discriminates against users based on
24 their identities. As long as YouTube’s algorithm profiles users, then YouTube cannot be applying
25 the same rules equally to all users in a neutral manner.

26 25. YouTube did not inform me that my videos would be distributed, made available
27 for viewing, or monetized for profit based on who I am (a lesbian educator) or on my stated views
28 regardless of the actual content of the video posted. Nor did YouTube inform me that to the extent
that it sponsored other creators, or their channels or individual videos, that those sponsored
creators/channels/videos would not be subject to the same Terms of Service, Community
Guidelines, Partnership Program Terms, or AdSense Terms of Service that I must follow. Nor did
YouTube inform me that it would be creating Defendants’ own original video content which
would not be subjected to the same Terms of Service, Community Guidelines, Partnership
Program Terms, or AdSense Terms of Service that I and other third-party users must follow.

1 26. YouTube did not inform me that in giving Defendants a license to use the videos I
2 posted, that it would allow other YouTube users to copy my original videos, post them on the
3 channels of other YouTube users, or receive revenue related to my original videos.

4 27. Tamara Johnson, one of the named Plaintiffs, is an LGBTQ+ creator who operates
5 the YouTube channel, SVTV Network. Ms. Johnson also owns and operates an internet online
6 on-demand monthly subscription network <https://www.svtvnetwork.com/> dedicated to original
7 content specifically designed for LGBTQ+ audiences. Ms. Johnson is an African American. Her
8 original web series videos feature African American members of the LGBTQ community.

9 28. In their Reply Brief, Defendants assert that:

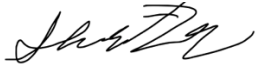
10 . . . Plaintiffs’ opposition brief also purports to represent the interests of “African
11 American content creators and users” (see, e.g., Opp. 1), but the Complaint does
12 not include any actual allegations in support of any claim for racial discrimination.
13 Reply fn.2 at p.3.

14 This is not true. Plaintiffs’ Second Amended Complaint includes allegations that Defendants
15 unlawfully use “data regarding the video **creators,’ subscribers,’ or viewers’ . . . race**, ethnicity,
16 commercial, or political identities or viewpoints” (paragraph 7 emphasis added); and Defendants
17 “rely upon and invoke federal law under Section 230(c) to preempt and immunize unlawful
18 filtering, regulations, and practices on the YouTube Platform, including **practices which**
19 **discriminate based upon race . . .** or individual viewpoints, and in doing so, engage in unlawful
20 discriminatory, arbitrary, and capricious repression of public speech under color of federal law.”
21 [Paragraph 289 emphasis added.] The Second Amended Complaint also alleges that Defendants
22 are “using identity based censorship to determine who can and cannot continue to use the
23 YouTube Platform” (paragraph 8); and that their representative “promised LGBTQ+ YouTubers
24 that Defendants would ensure that **‘Restricted Mode’ should not filter out content belonging to**
25 **individuals or groups based on certain attributes like** gender, gender identity, political
26 viewpoints, **race**, religion or sexual orientation,” (paragraph 29, 121, emphasis added).

27 29. The allegations of the Second Amended Complaint identified above are consistent
28 with and supported by what I was told by the YouTube representatives at the September 14-event
regarding racial profiling and discrimination embedded in the algorithm. When called to testify as

1 a witness, I will testify specifically that the YouTube representatives at the September 14 event
2 said that the algorithm was targeting African American creators, subscribers and viewers in the
3 same way that it was targeting LGBTQ creators, subscribers and viewers.

4 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the
5 foregoing is true and Executed this 20th day of April, 2020, at New York, New York.

6 
7 _____

8 STEPHANIE FROSCH
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Exhibit “1”

From: **Steph Frosch** <ellosteph@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Aug 20, 2019 at 12:04 AM
Subject: Fwd: Focus Group event: YouTube's Advertising Guidelines
To: Stephanie Frosch <stephfrosch@gmail.com>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Laura Chernikoff** <laura@internetcreatorsguild.com>
Date: Thu, Sep 21, 2017 at 11:46 AM
Subject: Re: Focus Group event: YouTube's Advertising Guidelines
To: Steph Frosch <ellosteph@gmail.com>

Thanks for participating in this ICG event with YouTube. We know this session had some logistical challenges with the timing and apologize. We're still experimenting with this type of event, and thinking about ways to advocate for creators about the difficult monetization and advertising guidelines challenges. We'd love to hear about your experience – you can share your honest feedback by [filling out this brief survey](#).

Laura

Laura Chernikoff
Executive Director
Internet Creators Guild
internetcreatorsguild.com

On Wed, Sep 13, 2017 at 2:57 PM, Steph Frosch <ellosteph@gmail.com> wrote:
Signed and sent! Looking forward to tomorrow.

All the best,
Stephanie Frosch
[YouTube.com/ElloSteph](https://www.youtube.com/ElloSteph)

On Wed, Sep 13, 2017 at 11:21 AM, Laura Chernikoff <laura@internetcreatorsguild.com> wrote:

Hey, I wanted to send a quick reminder to sign the NDA YouTube sent for tomorrow's event. They need everyone attending the event to sign in order to participate, so I wanted to make sure you hadn't missed it. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns!

Laura

Laura Chernikoff
Executive Director
Internet Creators Guild
internetcreatorsguild.com

On Mon, Sep 11, 2017 at 11:07 AM, Laura Chernikoff <laura@internetcreatorsguild.com> wrote:

Thanks Davey! Moving you to bcc.

Steph, we're excited to have you at this event this week. Here's a confirmation with details about the location.

Please note that a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) will be sent via email by a member of the YouTube team and is required to be signed prior to the event, so keep an eye out!

RSVP: You are confirmed.

Date: Thursday, September 14th

Check In Time: 11am

Presentation Starts: 11:30am

*Lunch and an opportunity to mingle with your fellow creators will be included.

Location: YouTube Playa Vista Office –

[12400 W. Bluff Creek Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90094](#)

Directions: At the intersection of S Centinela Ave & Jefferson Blvd, turn onto S Campus Center Dr. Drive to the end of Campus Center Dr. Turn left on West Bluff Creek Drive and make a quick right into “Lot B”. US-PLV-H10 will be the building just West of the parking lot.

If you have trouble finding the office, contact **Ben Kramer:** benkramer@google.com // [650-495-7545](tel:650-495-7545)

If your plans have changed and you are unable to attend, please let us know ASAP.

Laura

Laura Chernikoff

Executive Director

Internet Creators Guild

internetcreatorsguild.com

On Fri, Sep 8, 2017 at 5:36 PM, Davey Wavey <davey@daveywavey.tv> wrote:

Hey Laura,

CC'ing Steph Frosch on this. She'd love to attend!

On Thu, Aug 31, 2017 at 6:06 PM, Laura Chernikoff <laura@internetcreatorsguild.com> wrote:
Unfortunately this event is in-person only. Sorry to hear you can't make it, but we'll keep you in mind for similar events in the future.

Do any other LA-based creators come to mind who were effected by this issue? I know the LGBT community especially deals with this and I want to make sure their voices are well represented in that room.

Laura

Laura Chernikoff

Executive Director

Internet Creators Guild
internetcreatorsguild.com

On Tue, Aug 29, 2017 at 9:52 AM, Davey Wavey <davey@daveywavey.tv> wrote:
Hey Laura,

I'll be traveling - is there a remote option for attending?

Best,
Davey

On Fri, Aug 25, 2017 at 1:28 PM, Laura Chernikoff <laura@internetcreatorsguild.com> wrote:
Hey Davey,

You're invited to an upcoming event put on by the Internet Creators Guild, in partnership with YouTube on Thursday, September 14th at 11:00 AM.

Following the advertising situation on YouTube this spring (dubbed the "Adpocalypse"), YouTube is interested in hearing about creators' experiences on the platform. In particular, it's important for creators to understand the advertising guidelines and tools that brands interact with, in order to be aware how it may affect your monetization.

We've been discussing this issue with YouTube, who have been working to address creator concerns on this topic. They would like to share this presentation, which will be under NDA, in order to hear from ICG Members and creators we're in touch with as part of a small focus group.

We thought you would be an engaged and thoughtful participant and hope you're able to attend.

Please RSVP with either yes, no, or maybe by September 5th.

Thursday, September 14th
Check in 11:00 AM; presentation at 11:30 AM
YouTube Playa Vista Campus

Understanding YouTube's Advertising-Friendly Content Guidelines

In this session, YouTube will cover the recent changes to the platform's Advertiser-Friendly Content Guidelines and what they mean to both advertisers and creators. They will review the updated guidelines, discuss how YouTube surfaces ads, and the targeting systems advertisers leverage to place their ads. This will be followed by a Q&A, where creators will be able to ask questions, as well as share their experiences and feedback on these changes.

This event is invite-only and has limited space. If you know of other creators who would be interested in the topic and available to attend, please let me know their name, channel, and email address.

Thanks!

Laura

Laura Chernikoff
Executive Director
Internet Creators Guild
internetcreatorsguild.com

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Davey Wavey
Digital Storyteller | daveywavey.tv

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Davey Wavey
Digital Storyteller | daveywavey.tv

Stephanie Frosch



[YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)

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Stephanie Frosch

she/her/hers
Storyteller || Activist || Educator ||

phone: +1 954.235.4604



Exhibit “2”

From: **Laura Chernikoff** <laura@internetcreatorsguild.com>
Date: Mon, Sep 11, 2017 at 1:08 PM
Subject: Re: Focus Group event: YouTube's Advertising Guidelines
To:
Cc: Steph Frosch <ellosteph@gmail.com>

Thanks Davey! Moving you to bcc.

Steph, we're excited to have you at this event this week. Here's a confirmation with details about the location.

Please note that a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) will be sent via email by a member of the YouTube team and is required to be signed prior to the event, so keep an eye out!

RSVP: You are confirmed.

Date: Thursday, September 14th

Check In Time: 11am

Presentation Starts: 11:30am

*Lunch and an opportunity to mingle with your fellow creators will be included.

Location: YouTube Playa Vista Office –
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If your plans have changed and you are unable to attend, please let us know ASAP.

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Laura Chernikoff

Executive Director

Internet Creators Guild

internetcreatorsguild.com

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Laura Chernikoff

Executive Director

Internet Creators Guild

internetcreatorsguild.com

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This event is invite-only and has limited space. If you know of other creators who would be interested in the topic and available to attend, please let me know their name, channel, and email address.

Thanks!

Laura

Laura Chernikoff
Executive Director
Internet Creators Guild
internetcreatorsguild.com

Davey Wavey
Digital Storyteller | daveywavey.tv

Davey Wavey
Digital Storyteller | daveywavey.tv

Stephanie Frosch

A stylized signature logo for 'ElleSteph' in a cursive, orange-brown font. The name is flanked by two horizontal arrows pointing outwards.

[YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)

Exhibit “3”

From: **Google Legal** <nda-noreply@google.com>
Date: Wed, Sep 13, 2017 at 4:56 PM
Subject: You have accepted Google's Non-Disclosure Agreement
To: <StephFrosch@gmail.com>

You have accepted the terms and conditions presented in Google's Non-Disclosure Agreement on 2017-09-13 20:56:35.

Company Name: ElloSteph
Name: Stephanie Frosch
Title: Content Creator
Email: StephFrosch@gmail.com
Address:
1300 N Curson Ave Apt 4
West Hollywood, California, 90046
United States

Below is a copy of the Agreement for your reference:

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

In order to evaluate and possibly enter into a business transaction (the "Purpose"), Google Inc., for itself and its subsidiaries and affiliates, and the other party identified below hereby agree:

1. The Effective Date of this agreement is the date this agreement is accepted by the party identified below.
2. A party (the "Discloser") may disclose to the other party (the "Recipient") information pertaining to the Purpose that the Discloser considers confidential ("Confidential Information").
3. Recipient may use Confidential Information only for the Purpose. Recipient must use a reasonable degree of care to protect Confidential Information and to prevent any unauthorized use or disclosure of Confidential Information. Recipient may share Confidential Information with its employees, directors, agents or third party contractors who need to know it and if they have agreed with either party in writing to keep information confidential.
4. Confidential Information does not include information that: (a) was known to Recipient without restriction before receipt from Discloser; (b) is publicly available through no fault of Recipient; (c) is rightfully received by Recipient from a third party without a duty of confidentiality; or (d) is independently developed by Recipient. A party may disclose Confidential Information when compelled to do so by law if it provides

reasonable prior notice to the other party, unless a court orders that the other party not be given notice.

5. Either party may terminate this agreement with thirty days prior written notice, but this agreement's provisions will survive as to Confidential Information that is disclosed before termination.

6. Unless the parties otherwise agree in writing, Recipient's duty to protect Confidential Information expires five years from disclosure.

7. This agreement imposes no obligation to proceed with any business transaction.

8. No party acquires any intellectual property rights under this agreement except the limited rights necessary to use the Confidential Information for the Purpose.

9. This agreement does not create any agency or partnership relationship. This agreement is not assignable or transferable by either party without the prior written consent of the other party.

10. This agreement is the parties' entire agreement on this topic, superseding any prior or contemporaneous agreements. Any amendments must be in writing. The parties may execute this agreement in counterparts, which taken together will constitute one instrument. Failure to enforce any of provisions of this agreement will not constitute a waiver.

11. This agreement is governed by the laws of the State of California, excluding its conflict-of-laws principles. The exclusive venue for any dispute relating to this agreement shall be Santa Clara County, California.

CommMutual Rev 112707



Stephanie Frosch

she/her/hers

Storyteller || Activist || Educator ||

phone: +1 954.235.4604



Exhibit “4”

From: White, Lauren Gallo <lwhite@wsgr.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2020 6:21 PM
To: Debi Ramos <dramos@bgrfirm.com>
Cc: Kramer, David <DKramer@wsgr.com>; Willen, Brian <bwillen@wsgr.com>; Knoll, Kelly <kknoll@wsgr.com>; Peter Obstler <pobstler@bgrfirm.com>; Grubbs, Deborah <DGrubbs@wsgr.com>; Kathleen McCormick <kmccormick@bgrfirm.com>
Subject: Re: Divino Group, LLC v Google LLC, et al. [IWOV-DOCSLA.FID349140]

Debi:

As I said in my letter, further discussion would be productive to identify whether the information Ms. Frosch wishes to disclose might be protected by her NDA with YouTube. That is because we share your position that “any protective order [cannot] be used to keep non-confidential information from being presented to the Court and the public.” Your continued argument and apparent insistence on running to court despite defendants’ desire to meet and confer—and despite the parties’ obligation to do so—are unwarranted and improper. Nevertheless, because defendants are not aware of any confidential information that Ms. Frosch might have learned at the September 14, 2017 event that might be protected by her NDA with YouTube, defendants have no intention of enforcing the NDA against her. While it would of course be premature to introduce testimony or other evidence at the current stage of the case, in the event this case gets past the pleadings, defendants will not enforce the NDA to prevent Ms. Frosch from testifying about her September 14, 2017 meeting. But YouTube’s willingness to release Ms. Frosch from her obligations is not license to you to misstate the record, make misrepresentations, or improperly offer evidence to the Court.

Best regards,
Lauren

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PROOF OF SERVICE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

At the time of service, I was over 18 years of age and not a party to this action. I am employed in the County of Los Angeles, State of California. My business address is 801 S. Figueroa Street, Suite 2000, Los Angeles, CA 90017.

On April 20, 2020, I served true copies of the following document(s) described as

**PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR LEAVE TO FILE SUR-REPLY BRIEF;
DECLARATION OF PETER OBSTLER; DECLARATION OF STEPHANIE FROSCH;
(Proposed) ORDER TO FILE SUR-REPLY**

on the interested parties in this action as follows:

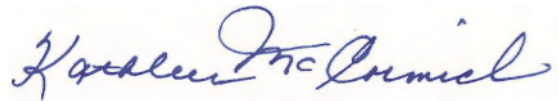
SEE ATTACHED SERVICE LIST

BY MAIL ON 4/21/20: I enclosed the document(s) in a sealed envelope or package addressed to the persons at the addresses listed in the Service List and placed the envelope for collection and mailing, following our ordinary business practices. I am readily familiar with the practice of Browne George Ross LLP for collecting and processing correspondence for mailing. On the same day that correspondence is placed for collection and mailing, it is deposited in the ordinary course of business with the United States Postal Service, in a sealed envelope with postage fully prepaid. I am a resident or employed in the county where the mailing occurred. The envelope was placed in the mail at Los Angeles, California.

BY EMAIL ON 4/20/20: I served the document via email transmission to the email address listed above and did not, within a reasonable period of time, receive notice of an unsuccessful submission.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on April 20, 2020, at Los Angeles, California.



Kathleen McCormick

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SERVICE LIST
Divino Group LLC v. Google LLC and YouTube, LLC
United States District Court - Case No. 5:19-cv-004749-VKD

INDRANEEL SUR
Trial Attorney
Civil Division, Federal Programs Branch
1100 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20530
202-616-8488
EMAIL: indraneel.sur@usdoj.gov

Exhibit “B”

Electronically Filed
by Superior Court of CA,
County of Santa Clara,
on 11/19/2019 3:51 PM
Reviewed By: R. Walker
Case #19CV340667
Envelope: 3671559

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

PRAGER UNIVERSITY,

Plaintiff,

vs.

GOOGLE LLC, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No.: 19CV340667

**ORDER AFTER HEARING ON
OCTOBER 25, 2019**

- (1) Demurrer by Defendants Google LLC and YouTube, LLC to the First Amended Complaint**
- (2) Motion by Plaintiff Prager University for Preliminary Injunction**

The above-entitled matter came on for hearing on Friday, October 25, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. in Department 1 (Complex Civil Litigation), the Honorable Brian C. Walsh presiding. A tentative ruling was issued prior to the hearing. The appearances are as stated in the record. The Court has reviewed and considered the written submissions of all parties and has reflected on the oral argument of counsel, including by reviewing the transcript lodged by plaintiff on November 14, 2019. Being fully advised, the Court adopts the tentative ruling as follows:

This action arises from Prager University's allegations that YouTube, LLC and its parent company Google LLC have unlawfully restricted content created by Prager on YouTube, defendants' social media and video sharing platform. Before the Court are defendants' demurrer

1 to the operative First Amended Complaint (“FAC”) and Prager’s motion for a preliminary
2 injunction. Both motions are opposed.

3 4 I. Factual and Procedural Background

5 As alleged in the FAC, Prager is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax exempt, educational
6 organization that promotes discussion on historical, religious, and current events by
7 disseminating educational videos intended for younger, student-based audiences between the
8 ages of 13 and 35. (FAC, ¶ 10.) The videos depict scholars, sources, and other prominent
9 speakers who often espouse viewpoints in the mainstream of conservative thought. (*Ibid.*)

10 Defendants operate YouTube as the largest and most profitable mechanism for
11 monetizing free speech and freedom of expression in the history of the world, generating \$10 to
12 15 billion in annual revenue by monetizing the content of users like Prager who are invited to
13 post videos to YouTube. (FAC, ¶ 11.) Since its inception, Prager has posted more than 250 of
14 its videos to YouTube. (*Id.* at ¶ 39.)

15 A. The Alleged Content Restriction Scheme

16 To induce users like Prager to upload video content, defendants represent that YouTube
17 is a public place for free speech defined by “four essential freedoms” that govern the public’s use
18 of the platform:

- 19 1. **Freedom of Expression:** We believe people should be able to speak freely, share
20 opinions, foster open dialogue, and that creative freedom leads to new voices,
21 formats and possibilities.
- 22 2. **Freedom of Information:** We believe everyone should have easy, open access
23 to information and that video is a powerful force for education, building
24 understanding, and documenting world events, big and small.
- 25 3. **Freedom of Opportunity:** We believe everyone should have a chance to be
26 discovered, build a business and succeed on their own terms, and that people—not
27 gatekeepers—decide what’s popular.
- 28 4. **Freedom to Belong:** We believe everyone should be able to find communities of
support, break down barriers, transcend borders and come together around shared
interests and passions.

1 (FAC, ¶ 12.) Defendants further promise that YouTube is governed by content-based rules and
2 filtering which “apply equally to all,” regardless of the viewpoint, identity, or source of the
3 speaker. (*Id.* at ¶ 13.)

4 However, contrary to these representations, defendants censor, restrict, and restrain video
5 content based on animus, discrimination, profit, and/or for any other reason “or no reason.”
6 (FAC, ¶ 14.) According to Prager, an internal memo and presentation entitled “The Good
7 Censor” shows that defendants have secretly decided to “ ‘migrate’ away from [serving as] a
8 hosting platform ... where the public is invited to engage in freedom of expression” to become a
9 media company that profits “by promoting Defendants’ own, or their preferred content through
10 the exercise of unfettered discretion to censor and curate otherwise public content.” (*Id.* at
11 ¶¶ 56-65.) To effectuate their discriminatory practices, defendants use clandestine filtering tools,
12 including algorithms and other machine-based and manual review tools, that are embedded with
13 discriminatory and anti-competitive animus-based code, including code that is used to identify
14 and restrict content based on the identity, viewpoint, or topic of the speaker. (*Id.*, ¶ 19.) They
15 also “ensure that the YouTube employees charged with administering the content filtering and
16 regulation scheme ... operate in a dysfunctional and politically partisan workplace environment.”
17 (*Id.* at ¶ 20.)

18 Against this background, Prager’s rights under California law have been violated by two
19 unlawful content-based restrictions: (i) “Restricted Mode,” a filtering protocol that defendants
20 use to block what they deem, in their sole, unfettered discretion, to be “inappropriate” for
21 “sensitive” audiences and (ii) “Advertising Restrictions,” a content-based video advertising
22 restriction policy that prohibits potential advertisers from accessing videos that defendants deem
23 “inappropriate” for advertising. (FAC, ¶ 17.) Defendants use these mechanisms as a pretext to
24 restrict and censor Prager’s videos, even though the content of its videos complies with
25 YouTube’s Terms of Service, Community Guidelines, and criteria for “sensitive audiences” and
26 advertisers, while they fail to restrict the content of other preferred users, content partners, and
27 content produced by defendants themselves that is not compliant. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 18, 23.) Defendants
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1 have provided no rational basis for restricting Prager’s content while allowing similar or
2 noncompliant content to go unrestricted. (*Id.* at ¶ 25.)

3 B. Restricted Mode

4 According to defendants, Restricted Mode is intended “to help institutions like schools as
5 well as people who wanted to better control the content they see on YouTube with an option to
6 choose an intentionally limited YouTube experience.” (FAC, ¶ 68.) Viewers can choose to turn
7 Restricted Mode on from their personal accounts, but it may also be turned on by system
8 administrators for libraries, schools, and other institutions or workplaces. (*Ibid.*) Defendants
9 estimate that about 1.5 percent of YouTube’s daily views (or approximately 75 million views per
10 day) come from individuals using Restricted Mode. (*Id.* at ¶ 69.) When Restricted Mode is
11 activated, a video’s name, creator or subject, and content, along with any other information
12 related to the video, are blocked, as if the video did not exist on the YouTube platform. (*Id.* at
13 ¶ 68.)

14 Defendants claim to restrict content in Restricted Mode based upon their “Restricted
15 Mode Guidelines,” which identify five criteria for determining whether content warrants
16 restriction:

- 17 1. Talking about drug use or abuse, or drinking alcohol in videos;
- 18 2. Overly detailed conversations about or depictions of sex or sexual activity;
- 19 3. Graphic descriptions of violence, violent acts, natural disasters and tragedies, or even
20 violence in the news;
- 21 4. Videos that cover specific details about events related to terrorism, war, crime, and
22 political conflicts that resulted in death or serious injury, even if no graphic imagery is
23 shown;
- 24 5. Inappropriate language, including profanity; and
- 25 6. Video content that is gratuitously incendiary, inflammatory, or demeaning towards an
26 individual or group.

27 (FAC, ¶ 70.) Videos are initially restricted through an automated filtering algorithm that
28 examines certain “signals” like the video’s metadata, title, and language, or following manual
review if a video is “flagged” as inappropriate by public viewers. (*Id.*, ¶ 71.)

YouTube also publishes “Community Guidelines” and “Age Based Restriction”
guidelines similar to its “Restricted Mode Guidelines”; however, content that complies with

1 these guidelines may nevertheless be subject to Restricted Mode. (FAC, ¶¶ 72-73.) Prager's
2 videos have never been age restricted or found to violate YouTube's Community Guidelines.
3 (*Id.* at ¶ 75.)

4 Defendants have admitted that they make "mistakes in understanding context and
5 nuances when [assessing] which videos to make available in Restricted Mode." (FAC, ¶ 91.)
6 For example, on March 19, 2017, they publicly admitted that they improperly restricted videos
7 posted or produced by members of the LGBTQ community and changed their policy, filtering
8 algorithm, and manual review policies in response to complaints from this community. (*Id.* at
9 ¶¶ 94-96.) However, Prager alleges that defendants have continued to improperly restrict videos
10 by LGBTQ users, which is evidence of viewpoint animus. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 97-98.)

11 C. Advertising Restrictions

12 Defendants also restrict users like Prager "from monetizing or boosting the reach or
13 viewer distribution of [their] videos." (FAC, ¶ 78.) Prager alleges that these restrictions are
14 ostensibly governed by the "AdSense program policies," which it suggests are "similar[ly]
15 vague, ambiguous, and arbitrary" to the Restricted Mode Guidelines. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 78, 80.) Prager
16 claims that, similar to their "mistakes" in applying "Restricted Mode," defendants once "denied a
17 reach boost or ad product" on the ground of "shocking content" based on a user's sexual or
18 gender orientation and viewpoint. (*Id.* at ¶ 81.) It alleges that the application of such an
19 "inappropriate" or "shocking content" designation falsely and unfairly stigmatizes Prager as
20 well. (*Id.* at ¶ 82.) (However, while Prager alleges that certain of its videos have been
21 demonetized, it does not allege whether defendants gave specific reasons for these actions or
22 what those reasons were.) (See *id.* at ¶ 84.)

23 D. The Parties' Dispute

24 In July of 2016, Prager discovered that defendants were restricting user access to its
25 videos through Restricted Mode. (FAC, ¶ 101.) It raised the issue with defendants, but they
26 have failed to offer any reasonable or consistent explanation for why Prager's videos are being
27 restricted. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 101-117.) In 2016, at least 16 Prager videos were restricted; by 2017, a total
28 of 21 were. (*Ibid.*) By the time the FAC was filed in May of 2019, the total had risen to 80. (*Id.*

1 at ¶ 127.) Prager’s videos were either “restricted as to content, demonetized, or both.” (*Id.* at
2 ¶ 116.) Defendants also discontinued Prager’s “ad grants” account for more than six days in
3 October of 2017. (*Id.* at ¶ 118.) On pages 9-17 of the FAC, Prager provides a chart listing its
4 restricted videos by title, along with videos from defendants’ “preferred content providers” with
5 similar titles that are unrestricted. (*Id.* at ¶ 23.)

6 On October 23, 2017, Prager sued defendants in federal court, asserting claims for
7 (1) violation of Article I, section 2 of the California Constitution; (2) violation of the First
8 Amendment of the United States Constitution; (3) violation of the California Unruh Civil Rights
9 Act (“Unruh Act”), Cal. Civ. Code. § 51 *et seq.*; (4) violation of California’s Unfair Competition
10 Law (“UCL”), Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200 *et seq.*; (5) breach of the implied covenant of
11 good faith and fair dealing; (6) violation of the Lanham Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1125 *et seq.*; and
12 (7) declaratory relief. (*Prager University v. Google LLC* (N.D. Cal., Mar. 26, 2018, No. 17-CV-
13 06064-LHK) 2018 WL 1471939, at *2.) It filed a motion for a preliminary injunction in the
14 federal action on December 29, 2017. (*Id.* at *3.) On March 26, 2018, the federal court granted
15 defendants’ motion to dismiss Prager’s federal claims and denied Prager’s motion for a
16 preliminary injunction, finding that Prager had failed to state a claim for violation of the First
17 Amendment because it did not allege state action, and had also failed to state a claim under the
18 Lanham Act. (*Id.* at *5-13.) Having dismissed all of Prager’s federal claims, the court declined
19 to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over its state law claims, explaining:

20 Here, the factors of economy, convenience, fairness, and comity support dismissal
21 of Plaintiff’s remaining state law claims. This case is still at the pleading stage,
22 and no discovery has taken place. Federal judicial resources are conserved by
23 dismissing the state law theories of relief at this stage. Further, the Court finds
24 that dismissal promotes comity as it enables California courts to interpret
25 questions of state law. This is an especially important consideration in the instant
26 case because Plaintiff asserts a claim that demands an analysis of the reach of
27 Article I, section 2 of the California Constitution in the age of social media and
28 the Internet.

(*Prager University v. Google LLC, supra*, 2018 WL 1471939, at *13.) Prager has appealed the
federal court’s ruling to the Court of Appeal for the Ninth Circuit, which heard argument in the
matter on August 27, 2019.

1 Prager filed this action on January 8, 2019, reasserting its state law claims for
2 (1) violation of Article I, section 2 of the California Constitution; (2) violation of the Unruh Act;
3 (3) violation of the UCL; and (4) breach of the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing.
4 On May 13, the Court entered a stipulated order establishing a briefing schedule for Prager's
5 anticipated motion for a preliminary injunction and defendants' anticipated demurrer and/or
6 special motion to strike. On May 20, pursuant to that order, Prager moved for a preliminary
7 injunction and filed the FAC, which asserts the same four causes of action as its original
8 complaint. Defendants filed their demurrer on June 28. Both matters are now fully briefed and
9 came on for hearing by the Court on October 25, 2019.

11 II. Demurrer to the FAC

12 Defendants demur to each cause of action in the FAC for failure to state a claim. (Code
13 Civ. Proc., § 430.10, subd. (e).) They contend that Prager's claims are barred by two provisions
14 of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (the "CDA") and by the First Amendment,
15 and otherwise fail to state a cause of action.

16 Defendants' request for judicial notice, which is unopposed, is GRANTED as to public
17 web pages displaying the terms of the various YouTube policies at issue in this action (Exhibits
18 1-9). (Evid. Code § 452, subd. (h); see *Pacific Employers Ins. Co. v. State of Cal.* (1970) 3
19 Cal.3d 573, 575, fn.1 [where portions of agreement were attached to plaintiff's complaint, the
20 balance of that agreement was properly a subject of judicial notice]; *Ingram v. Flippo* (1999) 74
21 Cal.App.4th 1280, 1285 [judicial notice of letter and media release was proper where, although
22 they were not attached to the complaint, they formed a basis for the claims, and the complaint
23 excerpted quotes and summarized parts in detail, thus "it is essential that we evaluate the
24 complaint by reference to these documents"].) Defendants' request is also GRANTED as to a
25 transcript of a case management conference held in the federal action, although the Court is not
26 bound by the court's comments or rulings in that case. (Evid. Code § 452, subd. (d).)

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1 A. Legal Standard

2 The function of a demurrer is to test the legal sufficiency of a pleading. (*Trs. Of Capital*
3 *Wholesale Elec. Etc. Fund v. Shearson Lehman Bros.* (1990) 221 Cal.App.3d 617, 621.)

4 Consequently, “[a] demurrer reaches only to the contents of the pleading and such matters as
5 may be considered under the doctrine of judicial notice.” (*South Shore Land Co. v.*
6 *Petersen* (1964) 226 Cal.App.2d 725, 732, internal citations and quotations omitted; see also
7 Code Civ. Proc., § 430.30, subd. (a).) “It is not the ordinary function of a demurrer to test the
8 truth of the plaintiff’s allegations or the accuracy with which he describes the defendant’s
9 conduct. ... Thus, ... the facts alleged in the pleading are deemed to be true, however improbable
10 they may be.” (*Align Technology, Inc. v. Tran* (2009) 179 Cal.App.4th 949, 958, internal
11 citations and quotations omitted.)

12 In ruling on a demurrer, the allegations of the complaint must be liberally construed, with
13 a view to substantial justice between the parties. (*Glennen v. Allergan, Inc.* (2016) 247
14 Cal.App.4th 1, 6.) Nevertheless, while “[a] demurrer admits all facts properly pleaded, [it does]
15 not [admit] contentions, deductions or conclusions of law or fact.” (*George v. Automobile Club*
16 *of Southern California* (2011) 201 Cal.App.4th 1112, 1120.) A demurrer will lie
17 where the allegations and matters subject to judicial notice clearly disclose some defense or bar
18 to recovery, including a statutory immunity. (*Casterson v. Superior Court (Cardoso)* (2002) 101
19 Cal.App.4th 177, 183.)

20 B. Violation of the California Constitution

21 Because concepts related to the parties’ speech rights under the First Amendment and
22 California Constitution are important to other aspects of its analysis, the Court will first examine
23 whether Prager states a claim for violation of Article I, section 2 of the California Constitution.

24 As urged by defendants, “California’s free speech clause”—like the First Amendment—
25 “contains a state action limitation.” (*Golden Gateway Center v. Golden Gateway Tenants*
26 *Assn.* (2001) 26 Cal.4th 1013, 1023.) However, the California Constitution’s protection of
27 speech has been interpreted more broadly in this regard. (See *Fashion Valley Mall, LLC v.*
28 *National Labor Relations Bd.* (2007) 42 Cal.4th 850, 862-863.) Most notably, in the

1 “groundbreaking” decision of *Robins v. Pruneyard Shopping Center* (1979) 23 Cal.3d 899, the
2 Supreme Court of California “departed from the First Amendment jurisprudence of the United
3 States Supreme Court and extended the reach of the free speech clause of the California
4 Constitution to privately owned shopping centers.” (*Golden Gateway Center v. Golden Gateway
5 Tenants Assn.*, *supra*, 26 Cal.4th at p. 1016.)

6 More than 20 years after *Robins v. Pruneyard*, *Golden Gateway Center* confirmed and
7 began to define the scope of the state action limitation under the California Constitution, finding
8 the requirement was not satisfied where a tenants’ association sought to distribute leaflets in a
9 private apartment complex that was “not freely open to the public.” (*Golden Gateway Center v.
10 Golden Gateway Tenants Assn.*, *supra*, 26 Cal.4th at p. 1031.) *Golden Gateway Center* looked
11 to the reasoning of *Robins* for guidance, noting that “*Robins* relied heavily on the functional
12 equivalence of the shopping center to a traditional public forum—the downtown or central
13 business district,” and relied on “the public character of the property,” emphasizing “the public’s
14 unrestricted access.” (*Id.* at pp. 1032-1033, internal citations and quotations omitted.) *Golden
15 Gateway Center* held that this unrestricted access is a “threshold requirement for establishing
16 state action”: without it, private property “is not the functional equivalent of a traditional public
17 forum.” (*Id.* at p. 1033.) In announcing this requirement, the opinion confirmed that it “largely
18 follow[ed] the Court of Appeal decisions construing *Robins*,” including *Planned Parenthood v.
19 Wilson* (1991) 234 Cal.App.3d 1662. (*Id.* at p. 1033.) Those decisions also emphasized
20 *Robins*’s focus on “the unique character of the modern shopping center and ... the public role
21 such centers have assumed in contemporary society” by effectively replacing “the traditional
22 town center business block, where historically the public’s First Amendment activity was
23 exercised and its right to do so scrupulously guarded.” (*Planned Parenthood v. Wilson, supra*,
24 234 Cal.App.3d at pp. 1669-1670.) This concept was again emphasized by the California
25 Supreme Court in *Fashion Valley*, which repeatedly referenced “[t]he idea that private property
26 can constitute a public forum for free speech if it is open to the public in a manner similar to that
27 of public streets and sidewalks” (*Fashion Valley Mall, LLC v. National Labor Relations Bd.*,
28 *supra*, 42 Cal.4th at p. 858; see also *id.* at p. 859.)

1 With this fundamental principle in mind, it is apparent that Prager does not state a claim
2 under the California Constitution. Prager contends that “YouTube is the cyber equivalent of a
3 town square where citizens exchange ideas on matters of public interest” and that defendants
4 have opened their platform to the public by advertising its use for this purpose. However, Prager
5 does not allege that it has been denied access to the core YouTube service. Rather, it urges that
6 its access to “Restricted Mode” and YouTube’s advertising service has been restricted. Prager
7 does not persuade the Court that these services are freely open to the public or are the functional
8 equivalent of a traditional public forum like a town square or a central business district.¹

9 Considering “the nature, purpose, and primary use of the property; the extent and nature of the
10 public invitation to use the property; and the relationship between the ideas sought to be
11 presented and the purpose of the property’s occupants” (*Albertson’s, Inc. v. Young* (2003) 107
12 Cal.App.4th at p. 119), it is clear that these services are nothing like a traditional public forum.
13 “Restricted Mode” is an optional service that enables users to limit the content that they (or their
14 children, patrons, or employees) view in order to avoid mature content. Limiting content is the
15 very purpose of this service, and defendants do not give content creators unrestricted access to it
16 or suggest that they will do so. The service exists to permit users to avoid the more open
17 experience of the core YouTube service. Similarly, the use of YouTube’s advertising service is
18 restricted to meet the preferences of advertisers. (See FAC, ¶ 80 [stated purpose of advertising
19 restrictions “is to keep Google’s content and search networks safe and clean for our advertisers
20 ...”]; Declaration of Brian M. Willen, Exs. 7-9.)

21 Defendants correctly urge that even to recognize the core YouTube platform as a public
22 forum would be a dramatic expansion of *Robins*. As one federal court observed, “[t]he analogy
23 between a shopping mall and the Internet is imperfect, and there are a host of potential ‘slippery
24 slope’ problems that are likely to surface were [*Robins*] to apply to the Internet.” (*hiQ Labs, Inc.*
25 *v. LinkedIn Corporation* (N.D. Cal. 2017) 273 F.Supp.3d 1099, 1116 [observing that “[n]o court
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27
28 ¹ Prager cites no authority that supports its position that a court can never determine the applicability of *Robins* on demurrer, and this position is incorrect. (See *Savage v. Trammell Crow Co.* (1990) 223 Cal.App.3d 1562, 1577, fn. 4 [stating that scope of *Robins* can be addressed on demurrer in appropriate circumstances].) Here, the necessary facts are alleged in the FAC and/or subject to judicial notice.

1 has expressly extended [*Robins*] to the Internet generally”], *aff’d and remanded* (9th Cir. 2019)
2 938 F.3d 985.) However the courts of this state ultimately view that analogy with regard to a
3 dominant, widely-used site like the core YouTube service, the analogy falls apart completely on
4 the facts alleged here. “Restricted Mode” and YouTube’s advertising service are new, inherently
5 selective platforms that do not resemble a traditional public forum. As discussed below, even
6 more than the core YouTube service, these platforms necessarily reflect the exercise of editorial
7 discretion rather than serving as an open “town square.”

8 Finally, Prager contends that cases that have deemed web sites to be “public forums” for
9 purposes of California’s “anti-SLAPP” statute require this Court to extend *Robins* to its claim.
10 However, the anti-SLAPP statute encompasses speech “*in a place open to the public or a public*
11 *forum in connection with an issue of public interest*” (Code Civ. Proc., § 425.16, subd. (e)(3),
12 emphasis added), and has been applied to locations that clearly do not meet the standard
13 described in *Golden Gateway Center*. (See, e.g., *Seelig v. Infinity Broadcasting Corp.* (2002) 97
14 Cal.App.4th 798, 807 [anti-SLAPP statute applied to comments made during on-air discussion
15 on talk radio].) “[T]he protections afforded by the anti-SLAPP statute are not coextensive with
16 the categories of conduct or speech protected by the First Amendment or its California
17 counterparts (Cal. Const., art. I, §§ 2–4).” (*Industrial Waste & Debris Box Service, Inc. v.*
18 *Murphy* (2016) 4 Cal.App.5th 1135, 1152.) “As our high court recently reaffirmed, ‘courts
19 determining whether conduct is protected under the anti-SLAPP statute look not to First
20 Amendment law, but to the statutory definitions in section 425.16, subdivision (e).’ ” (*Ibid.*,
21 quoting *City of Montebello v. Vasquez* (2016) 1 Cal.5th 409, 422.)

22 Defendants’ demurrer to the first cause of action will accordingly be sustained without
23 leave to amend. In addition to failing to state a claim under *Robins v. Pruneyard*, this cause of
24 action is barred by section 230 of the CDA for the reasons discussed below. (See *In re*
25 *Garcia* (2014) 58 Cal.4th 440, 452 [supremacy clause of the federal Constitution requires that
26 any conflicting state law give way to federal statute], citing U.S. Const., art. VI, cl. 2 [“This
27 Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof ... shall
28

1 be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, any thing in
2 the Constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding”].)

3 B. CDA Immunity

4 Section 230(c)(1) of the CDA provides that “[n]o provider or user of an interactive
5 computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by
6 another information content provider.” “§ 230 precludes courts from entertaining claims that
7 would place a computer service provider in a publisher’s role. Thus, lawsuits seeking to hold a
8 service provider liable for its exercise of a publisher’s traditional editorial functions—such as
9 deciding whether to publish, withdraw, postpone or alter content—are barred.” (*Hassell v.*
10 *Bird* (2018) 5 Cal.5th 522, 536, quoting *Zeran v. America Online, Inc.* (4th Cir. 1997) 129 F.3d
11 327, 330.)

12 “The CDA—of which section 230 is a part—was enacted in 1996.” (*Delfino v. Agilent*
13 *Technologies, Inc.* (2006) 145 Cal.App.4th 790, 802.) “Its ‘primary goal ... was to control the
14 exposure of minors to indecent material’ over the Internet.” (*Ibid.*, quoting *Batzel v. Smith* (9th
15 Cir. 2003) 333 F.3d 1018, 1026, superseded by statute on another point as stated in *Breazeale v.*
16 *Victim Services, Inc.* (9th Cir. 2017) 878 F.3d 759, 766.) “Thus, an ‘important purpose of
17 [the CDA] was to encourage [Internet] service providers to self-regulate the dissemination of
18 offensive materials over their services.’ ” (*Ibid.*, quoting *Zeran v. America Online, Inc.*, *supra*,
19 129 F.3d at p. 331.) Section 230(c)(2) consequently immunizes service providers² who
20 endeavor to restrict access to material deemed objectionable, providing that

21 [n]o provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be held liable on
22 account of--

23 (A) any action voluntarily taken in good faith to restrict access to or availability of
24 material that the provider or user considers to be obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy,
25 excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable, whether or not such
material is constitutionally protected; or

26 (B) any action taken to enable or make available to information content providers
27 or others the technical means to restrict access to material described in

28 ² There is no dispute that defendants are providers of “an interactive computer service” under section 230.

1 paragraph (1).³

2 (47 U.S.C. § 230(c)(2).)

3 A second, but related, objective of the CDA “was to avoid the chilling effect upon
4 Internet free speech that would be occasioned by the imposition of tort liability upon companies
5 that do not create potentially harmful messages but are simply intermediaries for their delivery.”
6 (*Delfino v. Agilent Technologies, Inc.*, *supra*, 145 Cal.App.4th at pp. 802-803.) The legislative
7 history reflects that Congress was responding to a New York trial court case where “a service
8 provider was held liable for defamatory comments posted on one of its bulletin boards, based on
9 a finding that the provider had adopted the role of ‘publisher’ by actively screening and editing
10 postings.” (*Barrett v. Rosenthal* (2006) 40 Cal.4th 33, 44.) “ ‘Fearing that the specter of liability
11 would ... deter service providers from blocking and screening offensive material,’ ” Congress
12 forbid “ ‘the imposition of publisher liability on a service provider for the exercise of its editorial
13 and self-regulatory functions.’ ” (*Id.*, quoting *Zeran v. America Online, Inc.*, *supra*, 129 F.3d at
14 p. 331.) Thus, section 230(c)(1) “ ‘confer[s] broad immunity on Internet intermediaries’ ” in “
15 ‘a strong demonstration of legislative commitment to the value of maintaining a free market for
16 online expression.’ ” (*Hassell v. Bird*, *supra*, 5 Cal.5th at p. 539, quoting *Barrett v. Rosenthal*,
17 *supra*, 40 Cal.4th at p. 56.)

18 Of the two provisions, section 230(c)(1) has been applied more frequently and broadly,
19 including by courts in the Northern District of California to conduct indistinguishable from that
20 alleged in this action. Notably, in *Sikhs for Justice “SFJ”, Inc. v. Facebook, Inc.* (N.D. Cal.
21 2015) 144 F.Supp.3d 1088, 1090, *aff’d sub nom. Sikhs for Justice, Inc. v. Facebook, Inc.* (9th
22 Cir. 2017) 697 Fed.App’x. 526, a human rights organization alleged that Facebook blocked
23 access to its page in India “on its own or on the behest of the Government of India,” because of
24 discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, ancestry, and national origin. Quoting *Barnes v.*
25 *Yahoo!, Inc.* (9th Cir. 2009) 570 F.3d 1096 and *Fair Housing Council of San Fernando Valley v.*
26 *Roommates.Com, LLC* (9th Cir. 2008) 521 F.3d 1157, the court reasoned that

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28 ³ It is widely agreed that section 230(c)(2)(B)’s reference to “paragraph (1)” is an error, and the provision should be interpreted to refer to section 230(c)(2)(A) or “paragraph (A).” (See, e.g., *Enigma Software Group USA, LLC v. Malwarebytes, Inc.* (9th Cir. 2019) 938 F.3d 1026, 1031, fn. 1.)

1
2 [p]ublication involves reviewing, editing, and deciding whether to publish or to
3 withdraw from publication third-party content. Thus, a publisher decides whether
4 to publish material submitted for publication. It is immaterial whether this
5 decision comes in the form of deciding what to publish in the first place or what
6 to remove among the published material. ***In other words, any activity that can be
boiled down to deciding whether to exclude material that third parties seek to
post online is perforce immune under section 230.***

7 (*Sikhs for Justice “SFJ”, Inc. v. Facebook, Inc.*, *supra*, 144 F.Supp.3d at p. 1094, emphasis
8 added, internal citations and quotations omitted.) This approach has been endorsed by the Ninth
9 Circuit. (See *Riggs v. MySpace, Inc.* (9th Cir. 2011) 444 Fed.App’x. 986, 987 [district court
10 properly dismissed claims “arising from MySpace’s decisions to delete Riggs’s user profiles on
11 its social networking website yet not delete other profiles Riggs alleged were created by celebrity
12 imposters,” citing *Fair Housing Council of San Fernando Valley v. Roommates.Com, LLC*,
13 *supra*, 521 F.3d at pp. 1170-1171 for the proposition that “any activity that can be boiled down
14 to deciding whether to exclude material that third parties seek to post online is perforce immune
15 under section 230”].) California opinions have similarly reasoned that the “type of activity” at
16 issue here—“to restrict or make available certain material”—“is expressly covered by section
17 230.” (*Doe II v. MySpace Inc.* (2009) 175 Cal.App.4th 561, 572-573 [describing “the general
18 consensus to interpret section 230 immunity broadly, extending from *Zeran ...*”]; see also
19 *Hassell v. Bird*, *supra*, 5 Cal.5th at p. 537 [California “courts have followed *Zeran* in adopting a
20 broad view of section 230’s immunity provisions”].) This interpretation was recently applied
21 again by the Northern District in *Federal Agency of News LLC v. Facebook, Inc.* (N.D. Cal., July
22 20, 2019, No. 18-CV-07041-LHK) --- F.Supp.3d ---, 2019 WL 3254208, where it was held that
23 section 230(c)(1) immunized Facebook from claims arising from its removal of a Russian
24 company’s account and page due to its alleged control by an entity found to have interfered in
25 the 2016 United States presidential election.⁴

26
27 ⁴ See also *Langdon v. Google, Inc.* (D. Del. 2007) 474 F.Supp.2d 622, 630-631 (applying immunity under section
28 230(c)(1) and/or (2) where plaintiff alleged defendants refused to display ads on his web pages criticizing the North
Carolina and Chinese governments based on political viewpoint discrimination); *Levitt v. Yelp! Inc.* (N.D. Cal., Oct.
26, 2011, No. C-10-1321 EMC) 2011 WL 5079526, at *7-9, *aff’d* (9th Cir. 2014) 765 F.3d 1123 (section 230(c)(1)
immunity applied to allegations that Yelp manipulated plaintiffs’ user reviews in order to induce them to pay for

1 Consistent with the language of section 230(c)(1), these cases do not question the service
 2 provider's motive in deciding to remove content from its service. While Prager contends that
 3 section 230(c)(1) immunity should not be applied where a plaintiff alleges a service provider
 4 acted in bad faith or to stifle competition, it cites no persuasive authority adopting this
 5 interpretation.⁵

6 Courts have expressed greater concern with the issue of motive when interpreting section
 7 230(c)(2), perhaps because paragraph (A) of that provision expressly includes a "good faith"
 8 requirement. Here, defendants rely on paragraph (B) of that provision, which they urge—like
 9 section 230(c)(1)—does not require good faith. In *Zango, Inc. v. Kaspersky Lab, Inc.* (9th Cir.
 10 2009) 568 F.3d 1169, 1176-1177, the Ninth Circuit applied section 230(c)(2)(B) to a provider of
 11 Internet security software that deemed the plaintiff's software to be "malware," noting that the
 12 plaintiff had waived the issue of "whether subparagraph (B), which has no good faith language,
 13

14 advertising); *Lancaster v. Alphabet Inc.* (N.D. Cal., July 8, 2016, No. 15-CV-05299-HSG) 2016 WL 3648608, at *2-
 15 3 ("§ 230(c)(1) of the CDA prohibits any claim arising from Defendants' removal of Plaintiffs' videos"); *Green v.*
 16 *YouTube, LLC* (D.N.H., Mar. 13, 2019, No. 18-CV-203-PB) 2019 WL 1428890, at *6, *report and recommendation*
 17 *adopted sub nom. Green v. YouTube, Inc.* (D.N.H., Mar. 29, 2019, No. 18-CV-203-PB) 2019 WL 1428311
 18 (applying immunity under section 230(c)(1) where plaintiff alleged his accounts were improperly shut down);
 19 *Brittain v. Twitter, Inc.* (N.D. Cal., June 10, 2019, No. 19-CV-00114-YGR) 2019 WL 2423375, at *3 (section
 20 230(c)(1) immunity applied where plaintiff alleged improper suspension of his Twitter accounts and that Twitter
 21 "limit[ed] users who reference new/competing networks and/or utilize Third Party API services"); *King v.*
 22 *Facebook, Inc.* (N.D. Cal., Sept. 5, 2019, No. 19-CV-01987-WHO) 2019 WL 4221768 (section 230(c)(1) immunity
 23 applied to theory that "Facebook has violated its (Terms of Service) in removing [plaintiff's] posts and suspending
 24 his account, and that Facebook treats black activists and their posts differently than it does other groups, particularly
 25 white supremacists and certain 'hate groups'").

26 ⁵ To the extent *e-ventures Worldwide, LLC v. Google, Inc.* (M.D. Fla. 2016) 188 F.Supp.3d 1265 adopts Prager's
 27 view, it does so by conflating section 230(c)(1) and section 230(c)(2) with no analysis. The Court does not find this
 28 persuasive. While a subsequent, unpublished opinion in that action, *e-ventures Worldwide, LLC v. Google,*
 29 *Inc.* (M.D. Fla., Feb. 8, 2017, No. 214CV646FTMPAMCM) 2017 WL 2210029, *3-4 reasoned that applying
 30 section 230(c)(1) to service providers' editorial decisions regarding a plaintiff's own content would swallow "the
 31 more specific immunity in (c)(2)" with its good faith requirement, the opinion went on to grant summary judgment
 32 based on the First Amendment's protection of editorial judgments, "no matter the motive." This case does not
 33 persuade the Court to part ways with the courts that apply section 230(c)(1) to the same end based on the same
 34 reasoning.

35 Similarly, *Levitt v. Yelp! Inc.* (N.D. Cal., Mar. 22, 2011, No. C 10-1321 MHP) 2011 WL 13153230, at *9 deemed it
 36 "a[] close[] question ... whether Yelp may be held liable for its removal of positive reviews for the alleged purpose
 37 of coercing businesses to purchase advertising," considering that this theory implicated bad faith. The court
 38 ultimately did not resolve the issue as it found the complaint otherwise failed to state a cause of action. A
 39 subsequent opinion in that case, *Levitt v. Yelp! Inc.* (N.D. Cal., Oct. 26, 2011, No. C-10-1321 EMC) 2011 WL
 40 5079526, *9 held that section 230(c)(1) does not include a good faith requirement, and applied "even assuming
 41 Plaintiffs have adequately pled allegations stating a claim of an extortionate threat with respect to Yelp's alleged
 42 manipulation of user reviews." The Court finds the reasoning of the subsequent opinion more persuasive.

1 should be construed implicitly to have a good faith component like subparagraph (A).” The
2 concurring opinion expressed concern with extending immunity beyond the facts present in that
3 case:

4 Congress plainly intended to give computer users the tools to filter the Internet’s
5 deluge of material *users* would find objectionable, in part by immunizing the
6 providers of blocking software from liability. *See* § 230(b)(3). But under the
7 generous coverage of § 230(c)(2)(B)’s immunity language, a blocking software
8 provider might abuse that immunity to block content for anticompetitive purposes
or merely at its malicious whim, under the cover of considering such material
“otherwise objectionable.”

9 (*Zango, Inc. v. Kaspersky Lab, Inc.*, *supra*, 568 F.3d at p. 1178 (conc. opn. of Fisher, J.).)

10 Noting that “[d]istrict courts nationwide have grappled with the issues discussed in *Zango*’s
11 majority and concurring opinions, and have reached differing results,” the Ninth Circuit recently
12 held that a service provider’s intent may be relevant under section 230(c)(2)(B): specifically,
13 where a plaintiff alleges blocking by a direct competitor for anticompetitive purposes, its claims
14 survive dismissal. (*Enigma Software Group USA, LLC v. Malwarebytes, Inc.* (9th Cir. 2019) 938
15 F.3d 1026.)

16 Here, defendants’ creation of a “Restricted Mode” to allow sensitive users to voluntarily
17 choose a more limited experience of the YouTube service is exactly the type of self-regulation
18 that Congress sought to encourage in enacting section 230, and fits within section 230(c)(2)(B)’s
19 immunity for “any action taken to enable or make available to ... others,” namely, YouTube
20 users, “the technical means to restrict access to” material “that the provider or user considers to
21 be obscene, ... excessively violent, ... or otherwise objectionable.” Rather than unilaterally
22 restricting access to material on its core platform as contemplated by section 230(c)(2)(A)—
23 which contains a “good faith” requirement—defendants allow users to voluntarily restrict access
24 to material that defendants deem objectionable for the stated reason that, like the categories of
25 material enumerated by the statute, it may be inappropriate for young or sensitive viewers.⁶ The
26

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28 ⁶ Consistent with these circumstances, a page discussing options for administrators employing “Restricted Mode,”
which was submitted by Prager in connection with its motion for preliminary injunction, indicates that
“[a]dministrators and designated approvers can now whitelist entire channels,” in addition to individual videos, to
ensure a channel is “watchable by your users.” (Declaration of Peter Obstler, Ex. L.) Thus, it appears that users can

1 Court views this as a critical difference between the two provisions and disagrees with the
2 majority in *Enigma*,⁷ who ignore the plain language of the statute by reading a good faith
3 limitation into section 230(c)(2)(B). (See *Enigma Software Group USA, LLC v. Malwarebytes,*
4 *Inc., supra*, 938 F.3d at p. 1040 (dis. opn. of Rawlinson, J.) [“The majority’s policy arguments
5 are in conflict with our recognition in *Zango* that the broad language of the Act is consistent with
6 ‘the Congressional goals for immunity’ as expressed in the language of the statute. [Citation.]
7 As the district court cogently noted, we ‘must presume that a legislature says in a statute what it
8 means and means in a statute what it says there.’ ”].)

9 Finding CDA immunity here is also consistent with cases that apply it in
10 indistinguishable circumstances based on section 230(c)(1), and with their reasoning, which
11 recognizes that challenges to a service provider’s editorial discretion “treat[]” the provider “as a
12 publisher.” (See *Sikhs for Justice “SFJ”, Inc. v. Facebook, Inc., supra*, 144 F.Supp.3d 1088
13 [applying section 230(c)(1) to claim under Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964]; *Federal*
14 *Agency of News LLC v. Facebook, Inc., supra*, 2019 WL 3254208 [applying section 230(c)(1) to
15 claims under Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Unruh Act, and for breach of the
16 implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing].) The Court finds that immunity under section
17 230(c)(1) also applies here, to the allegations involving both “Restricted Mode” and defendants’
18 advertising service.

19 While the Court understands Prager’s argument that all three provisions of section 230
20 should have a good faith requirement, this argument is contrary to the plain language of the
21 statute. (See *Hassell v. Bird, supra*, 5 Cal.5th at p. 540 [noting that *Barrett v. Rosenthal, supra*,
22 40 Cal.4th 33 voiced “qualms” that *Zeran*’s interpretation of section 230 provides blanket
23 immunity for those who intentionally redistribute defamatory statements, but held “these
24 concerns were of no legal consequence” where principles of statutory interpretation compelled a
25

26 specifically override defendants’ decisions to disable certain videos or channels in “Restricted Mode,” confirming
27 that “Restricted Mode” is a tool made available to users rather than a unilateral ban.

28 ⁷ See *People v. Williams* (1997) 16 Cal.4th 153, 190 (“Decisions of lower federal courts interpreting federal law are not binding on state courts.”); *Elliott v. Albright* (1989) 209 Cal.App.3d 1028, 1034 (although at times entitled to great weight, the decisions of the lower federal courts on federal questions are merely persuasive).

1 broad construction].) And while it is not this Court's role to judge the wisdom of the policy
2 embodied by section 230, there are good reasons to support it. As the court in *Levitt v. Yelp!*
3 *Inc.* (N.D. Cal., Oct. 26, 2011, No. C-10-1321 EMC) 2011 WL 5079526 reasoned,

4 traditional editorial functions often include subjective judgments informed by
5 political and financial considerations. [Citation.] Determining what motives are
6 permissible and what are not could prove problematic. Indeed, from a policy
7 perspective, permitting litigation and scrutin[izing] motive could result in the
8 "death by ten thousand duck-bites" against which the Ninth Circuit cautioned in
9 interpreting § 230(c)(1). [(*Fair Housing Council of San Fernando Valley v.*
10 *Roommates.Com, LLC, supra*, 521 F.3d at p. 1174.)]

11 One of Congres[s]'s purposes in enacting § 230(c) was to avoid the chilling effect
12 of imposing liability on providers by both safeguarding the "diversity of political
13 discourse ... and myriad avenues for intellectual activity" on the one hand, and
14 "remov[ing] disincentives for the development and utilization of blocking and
15 filtering technologies" on the other hand. §§ 230(a), (b); *see also* S.Rep. No. 104-
16 230, at 86 (1996) (Conf.Rep.), *available at* 1996 WL 54191, at *[194] (describing
17 purpose of section 230 to protect providers from liability "for actions to restrict or
18 to enable restrict[ion] of access to objectionable online material"). For that reason,
19 "[C]lose cases ... must be resolved in favor of immunity, lest we cut the heart out
20 of section 230" [(*Fair Housing Council of San Fernando Valley v.*
21 *Roommates.Com, LLC, supra*, 521 F.3d at p. 1174.)]

22 As illustrated by the case at bar, finding a bad faith exception to immunity under
23 § 230(c)(1) could force Yelp to defend its editorial decisions in the future on a
24 case by case basis and reveal how it decides what to publish and what not to
25 publish. Such exposure could lead Yelp to resist filtering out false/unreliable
26 reviews (as someone could claim an improper motive for its decision), or to
27 immediately remove all negative reviews about which businesses complained (as
28 failure to do so could expose Yelp to a business's claim that Yelp was strong-
arming the business for advertising money). The Ninth Circuit has made it clear
that the need to defend against a proliferation of lawsuits, regardless of whether
the provider ultimately prevails, undermines the purpose of section 230.

(*Levitt v. Yelp! Inc., supra*, 2011 WL 5079526, at *8-9.) In the Court's view, these concerns are
particularly salient here, where the challenged services are by definition more curated than
defendants' core service and could not exist without more robust screening by defendants.

In opposition to defendants' demurrer, Prager cites a number of cases that affirm the
principle applied in *Fair Housing Council of San Fernando Valley v. Roommates.Com, LLC,*
supra, 521 F.3d 1157, which held that a service provider is not entitled to CDA immunity with

1 regard to content it develops itself. However, this principle is inapposite here. Prager does not
2 allege that defendants developed any of Prager’s content or appended any commentary to it—to
3 the contrary, they allege the content became completely invisible in “Restricted Mode” or was
4 simply demonetized. Applying CDA immunity under these circumstances does not conflict with
5 *Roommates*. (See *Fair Housing Council of San Fernando Valley v. Roommates.Com, LLC*,
6 *supra*, 521 F.3d at p. 1163 [in enacting CDA immunity, “Congress sought to immunize
7 the *removal* of user-generated content, not the *creation* of content”].)⁸

8 Finally, Prager contends that applying CDA immunity here would constitute an unlawful
9 prior restraint on its speech in violation of the First Amendment. However, a federal court has
10 already held that defendants’ conduct does not violate the First Amendment, and this Court
11 agrees with that analysis for the reasons discussed in connection with its analysis of Prager’s
12 claim under the California Constitution. Moreover, Prager does not allege that defendants
13 prevented it from engaging in speech, even on their own platform—again, it contends that certain
14 videos were excluded from “Restricted Mode” and/or were demonetized.

15 The Court consequently finds that section 230(c)(2)(B) bars Prager’s claims related to
16 “Restricted Mode” and section 230(c)(1) bars all of its claims, with the possible exception of
17 those based on its own promises and representations, which are discussed below.⁹

18 C. Breach of the Implied Covenant of Good Faith and Fair Dealing and Fraud Under
19 the UCL

20 Finally, Prager correctly urges that some California authority holds section 230(c)(1) of
21 the CDA does not apply to claims based on a defendant’s own promises and representations to a
22 plaintiff, rather than its role as a publisher. (See *Demetriades v. Yelp, Inc.* (2014) 228
23 Cal.App.4th 294, 313 [this immunity does not apply where “plaintiff seeks to hold Yelp liable
24 for its own statements regarding the accuracy of its filter”]; but see *Hassell v. Bird, supra*, 5
25 Cal.5th at p. 542 [disapproving of “creative pleading” in an attempt to avoid section 230
26

27 ⁸ Although it does not bring a claim for defamation, Prager appears to suggest that defendants have defamed it by
28 removing its content from “Restricted Mode” or demonetizing it. Such a claim would likely be foreclosed by the
ruling in *Bartholomew v. YouTube, LLC*. (2017) 17 Cal.App.5th 1217, 1234.

⁹ The Court thus does not address defendants’ argument that Prager’s claims are barred by the First Amendment.

1 immunity].) This authority does not apply to the Court’s finding of immunity under section
2 230(c)(2)(B). In any event, Prager’s claims asserting this type of theory—namely, its claim for
3 breach of the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing and its claim under the fraud prong
4 of the UCL—do not state a cause of action.

5 Prager does not and cannot state a claim for breach of the implied covenant of good faith
6 and fair dealing in light of the express provisions of YouTube’s Terms of Service, which provide
7 that “YouTube reserves the right to remove Content without prior notice” and which also allow
8 YouTube to “discontinue any aspect of the Service at any time.” (See Declaration of Brian
9 Willen, Ex. 1; *Song fi Inc. v. Google, Inc.* (N.D. Cal. 2015) 108 F.Supp.3d 876, 885 [plaintiff
10 could not state a claim for violation of the covenant of good faith and fair dealing based on
11 content removal in light of YouTube’s Terms of Service].) Similarly, YouTube’s AdSense
12 Terms of Service reserve the right “to refuse or limit your access to the Services.” (Declaration
13 of Brian Willen, Ex. 8; see *Sweet v. Google Inc.* (N.D. Cal., Mar. 7, 2018, No. 17-CV-03953-
14 EMC) 2018 WL 1184777, at *9-10 [plaintiff could not state a claim for violation of the covenant
15 of good faith and fair dealing based on demonitization in light of similar reservation of rights in
16 YouTube’s Partner Program Terms].) “[C]ourts are not at liberty to imply a covenant directly at
17 odds with a contract’s express grant of discretionary power except in those relatively rare
18 instances when reading the provision literally would, contrary to the parties’ clear intention,
19 result in an unenforceable, illusory agreement.” (*Third Story Music, Inc. v. Waits* (1995) 41
20 Cal.App.4th 798, 808.) That is not the case here, and Prager does not contend that it is. (See
21 *Sweet v. Google Inc.*, *supra*, 2018 WL 1184777, at *9-10 [applying *Third Story*].)

22 As to the UCL fraud claim, to the extent it is based on the “four essential freedoms” set
23 forth above and similar statements, these statements are non-actionable puffery. (See
24 *Demetriades v. Yelp, Inc.*, *supra*, 228 Cal.App.4th at p. 311 [“ ‘a statement that is quantifiable,
25 that makes a claim as to the “specific or absolute characteristics of a product,” may be an
26 actionable statement of fact while a general, subjective claim about a product is non-actionable
27 puffery,’ ” quoting *Newcal Industries, Inc. v. Ikon Office Solution* (9th Cir.2008) 513 F.3d 1038,
28 1053]; *Prager University v. Google LLC*, *supra*, 2018 WL 1471939, at *11 [“None of the

1 statements about YouTube’s viewpoint neutrality identified by Plaintiff resembles the kinds of
2 ‘quantifiable’ statements about the ‘specific or absolute characteristics of a product’ that are
3 actionable under the Lanham Act.”.]

4 Prager also alleges that defendants represented that “the ‘same standards apply equally to
5 all’ when it comes to the content regulation on YouTube.” (FAC, ¶ 85; see also *id.* at ¶ 13.)
6 While this statement is arguably more than mere puffing (see *Demetriades v. Yelp, Inc., supra*,
7 228 Cal.App.4th at p. 311-312), Prager does not allege that it suffered a loss of money or
8 property as a result of its reliance on this statement. “There are innumerable ways in which
9 economic injury from unfair competition may be shown,” including where a plaintiff “ha[s] a
10 present or future property interest diminished.” (*Kwikset Corp. v. Superior Court (Benson)*
11 (2011) 51 Cal.4th 310, 323; see also *Alborzian v. JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.* (2015) 235
12 Cal.App.4th 29, 38 [UCL “unlawful” plaintiffs established standing by alleging diminished
13 credit score caused by defendant’s false negative reporting to credit agencies, even where they
14 never made payments on the loan at issue].) The “lost income, reduced viewership, and damage
15 to brand, reputation, and goodwill” that Prager alleges (FAC, ¶ 157) would certainly satisfy this
16 requirement if there were a causal connection between Prager’s alleged reliance on defendants’
17 statement in participating in the YouTube service and these harms. However, these injuries
18 cannot have resulted from Prager’s decision to use YouTube: they could only have been caused
19 by YouTube’s later decisions to restrict and/or demonetize Prager’s content. (See *Prager*
20 *University v. Google LLC, supra*, 2018 WL 1471939, at *11-12 [“Plaintiff has not sufficiently
21 alleged that it ‘has been or is likely to be injured as the result of the’ statements about YouTube’s
22 viewpoint neutrality. [Citation.] As discussed above, any harm that Plaintiff suffered was
23 caused by Defendants’ decisions to limit access to some of Plaintiff’s videos.”].) These later
24 decisions by YouTube could not have been relied on by Prager. (See *id.* at *11 [“Although
25 Plaintiff asserts that it has suffered injury in the form of ‘lower viewership, decreased ad
26 revenue, a reduction in advertisers willing to purchase advertisements shown on Plaintiff’s
27 videos, diverted viewership, and damage to its brand, reputation and goodwill,” ... nothing in
28 Plaintiff’s complaint suggests that this harm flowed directly from Defendants’ publication of

1 their policies and guidelines. Instead, any harm that Plaintiff suffered was caused by Defendants'
2 decisions to limit access to some of Plaintiff's videos"].) Moreover, recognizing this theory
3 would appear to conflict with principles of defamation law as recently discussed in *Bartholomew*
4 *v. YouTube, LLC*. (2017) 17 Cal.App.5th 1217.

5 Prager thus fails to state a cause of action based on the implied covenant of good faith
6 and fair dealing or the fraud prong of the UCL.

7 D. Conclusion and Order

8 For all these reasons, the demurrer to the first through fourth causes of action is
9 SUSTAINED WITHOUT LEAVE TO AMEND.

10
11 III. Motion for Preliminary Injunction

12 As discussed above, Prager has not shown a reasonable probability of success on the
13 merits in this action. Its motion for a preliminary injunction is consequently DENIED. (See *San*
14 *Francisco Newspaper Printing Co. v. Superior Court (Miller)* (1985) 170 Cal.App.3d 438, 442.)

15
16 IT IS SO ORDERED.

17 Dated: Nov. 19, 2019


18 
19 Honorable Brian C. Walsh
20 Judge of the Superior Court

Exhibit “C”

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9
10 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
11 **SAN JOSE DIVISION**

12 DIVINO GROUP LLC, a California limited
13 liability company, CHRIS KNIGHT, an
individual, CELSO DULAY, an individual,
14 CAMERON STIEHL, an individual,
BRIAANDCHRISY LLC, a Georgia limited
15 liability company, BRIA KAM, an individual,
CHRISY CHAMBERS, an individual, CHASE
16 ROSS, an individual, BRETT SOMERS, an
individual, and LINDSAY AMER, an individual,
17 STEPHANIE FROSCH, an individual, SAL
CINEQUEMANI, an individual, TAMARA
18 JOHNSON, an individual, and GREG
SCARNICI, an individual,

19 Plaintiffs,

20 vs.

21 GOOGLE LLC, a Delaware limited liability
22 company, YOUTUBE, LLC, a Delaware
limited liability company, and DOES 1-25,

23 Defendants.
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25
26
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Case No. 5:19-cv-004749-VKD

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'S
NOTICE OF INTERVENTION
TO DEFEND THE
CONSTITUTIONALITY OF
47 U.S.C. § 230(c)**

Action Filed: August 13, 2019
Trial Date: None Set
Rule 5.1 Notice Filed: December 20, 2019

1 Under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 5.1(c) and 24(a)(1), and in accordance with
2 the authorization of the Solicitor General of the United States, the United States hereby
3 intervenes in this action for the limited purpose of defending the constitutionality of Section
4 230(c) of the Communications Decency Act of 1996 (“CDA”) (Pub. L. No. 104-104, § 509,
5 codified at 47 U.S.C. § 230(c)).

6 On December 20, 2019, Plaintiffs filed a notice of constitutional challenge regarding
7 47 U.S.C. § 230(c) (Doc. 21). In that Notice, Plaintiffs stated that their pleadings allege that
8 “Section 230(c) does not, and cannot, apply in this case, under the plain language of the
9 statute or under the Constitution, to prevent the Plaintiffs from seeking legal redress for
10 harms and injuries caused by Defendants’ discrimination against them and other similarly
11 situated Plaintiffs and users of YouTube.” *Id.* at 3. Moreover, in opposition to the motion
12 to dismiss the operative complaint filed by Defendants (Doc. 25), Plaintiffs in their brief filed
13 February 24, 2020 made certain contentions regarding the constitutionality of 47 U.S.C. §
14 230(c) (Doc. 28). The Court has not yet certified a constitutional question under Rule 5.1(b)
15 and 28 U.S.C. § 2403.

16 The United States is entitled to intervene in this action under the Federal Rules of
17 Civil Procedure and by statute. Rule 5.1(c) permits the Attorney General to intervene in an
18 action where, as here, the constitutionality of a federal statute is challenged. *See* Fed. R. Civ.
19 P. 5.1(c). Rule 24 further permits a non-party to intervene when the non-party “is given an
20 unconditional right to intervene by a federal statute.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 24(a)(1). The United
21 States has an unconditional statutory right to intervene “[i]n any action . . . wherein the
22 constitutionality of any Act of Congress affecting the public interest is drawn in question
23” 28 U.S.C. § 2403(a). In such an action, “the court . . . shall permit the United States
24 to intervene . . . for argument on the question of constitutionality.” *Id.* Here, Plaintiffs have
25 “drawn in question” the constitutionality of 47 U.S.C. § 230(c), and the United States has an
26 unconditional right to intervene to defend the statute.

27 The United States will immediately hereafter file its memorandum in defense of the
28 constitutionality of 47 U.S.C. § 230(c). The United States’ intervention, including its filing

1 of a memorandum in support of the constitutionality of 47 U.S.C. § 230(c), will not interfere
2 with the timely adjudication of this action. This notification is also timely. By this Court's
3 order of April 23, 2020, the United States' deadline for intervention is today. Doc. 44.

4 Accordingly, the United States hereby provides notice of intervention in this action
5 for the purpose of defending the constitutionality of 47 U.S.C. § 230(c).

6
7 DATED: May 8, 2020

Respectfully submitted,
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9 ERIC WOMACK
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12 Trial Attorney

13 By: /s/ Indraneel Sur
14 INDRANEEL SUR

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16 Counsel for the United States of America
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10 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
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19 Plaintiffs,

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21 GOOGLE LLC, a Delaware limited liability
22 company, YOUTUBE, LLC, a Delaware
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23 Defendants.
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Case No. 5:19-cv-004749-VKD

**MEMORANDUM OF LAW FOR
INTERVENOR UNITED STATES
IN SUPPORT OF THE
CONSTITUTIONALITY OF
47 U.S.C. § 230(C)**

Action Filed: August 13, 2019
Trial Date: None Set
Rule 5.1 Notice Filed: December 20, 2019

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INTRODUCTION

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2 Plaintiffs, who are video creators seeking monetary and other recovery based on the
3 alleged editorial decisions of a popular Internet platform, YouTube, have raised a
4 constitutional challenge to Section 230(c) of the Communications Decency Act of 1996
5 (“CDA”) (Pub. L. No. 104-104, § 509, codified at 47 U.S.C. § 230(c)). When the World Wide
6 Web was in its early days in 1996, Congress sought through Section 230(c) to promote and
7 protect “Good Samaritan” blocking and screening of offensive material by limiting the
8 liability of website owners and operators. The statute immunizes for certain liability purposes
9 an “interactive computer service” provider from being treated as the publisher or speaker of
10 content created by third parties and hosted by the service (47 U.S.C. § 230(c)(1)), or for
11 removing or restricting access to certain types of offensive material (§ 230(c)(2)).

12 In seeking Rule 12(b)(6) dismissal of the operative complaint, YouTube has invoked
13 the statute as an affirmative defense to Plaintiffs’ claims, and Plaintiffs have responded by
14 arguing, among other things, that the statute violates the First Amendment and the equal
15 protection guarantee of the Fifth Amendment to the extent it shields YouTube from liability
16 for Plaintiffs’ claims. Plaintiffs also seek a declaratory judgement to that effect.

17 The United States intervenes today in response to Plaintiffs’ constitutional challenge,
18 and, in defense of the statute, respectfully limits this brief to two arguments.

19 *First*, under the doctrine of constitutional avoidance, this Court should start by
20 deciding the statutory arguments presented by the parties regarding the pending Rule 12(b)(6)
21 motion, because those non-constitutional grounds may obviate the need for decision on any
22 constitutional question. A court should decide a constitutional question only when
23 necessary, which would not be the situation here if the Court were to conclude that statutory
24 grounds suffice to dispose of the case.

25 *Second*, if the Court concludes that it must reach the constitutional question, Plaintiffs’
26 challenge should be rejected on the merits. Section 230(c) does not regulate Plaintiffs’
27 primary conduct. Instead, the statute establishes a rule prohibiting liability for certain
28 conduct by online platforms, including YouTube. Because the United States is intervening

1 for the limited purpose of defending the constitutionality of Section 230(c), it does not take
2 a position on whether the statute forecloses the particular claims Plaintiffs have alleged. But
3 assuming it does, that would not violate the First Amendment’s Speech Clause, because—as
4 the Ninth Circuit squarely held in *Prager University v. Google LLC*, 951 F.3d 991 (9th Cir.
5 2020)—YouTube is not a state actor capable of denying the freedom of speech. In other
6 words, Section 230(c) would not deny Plaintiffs any constitutional claim they otherwise
7 would have. Nor do Plaintiffs’ arguments find support in the First Amendment’s Petition
8 Clause or in the constitutional guarantee of equal protection. In short, however Plaintiffs’
9 challenge to Section 230(c) is framed, it is meritless, and should be rejected.

10 STATEMENT

11 **I. Statutory Background**

12 Section 230(c) of the CDA is entitled “Protection for ‘Good Samaritan’ blocking and
13 screening of offensive material.” The Ninth Circuit has described the statute as
14 “immuniz[ing] providers of interactive computer services against liability arising from
15 content created by third parties.” *Fair Hous. Council of San Fernando Valley v. Roommates.Com,*
16 *LLC*, 521 F.3d 1157, 1163-64 (9th Cir. 2008) (*en banc*) (footnotes omitted).

17 In particular, Paragraph (1) states: “No provider . . . of an interactive computer
18 service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another
19 information content provider.” 47 U.S.C. § 230(c)(1). The statute also provides that “[n]o
20 cause of action may be brought and no liability may be imposed under any State or local law
21 that is inconsistent with this section.” *Id.* § 230(e)(3). The result is to protect online
22 platforms from such liabilities as those the common law imposed on publishers or speakers
23 for libel or slander. Some courts have also construed the limitation to shield online platforms
24 against certain liabilities under federal law. *See, e.g., Sikhs for Justice “SFJ”, Inc. v. Facebook, Inc.*,
25 144 F. Supp. 3d 1088, 1096 (N.D. Cal. 2015), *aff’d sub nom. Sikhs for Justice, Inc. v. Facebook, Inc.*,
26 697 F. App’x 526 (9th Cir. 2017). The immunity applies only when the interactive computer
27 service provider is not also the “information content provider” of the material in question—
28

1 *i.e.*, the person “responsible, in whole or in part, for the creation or development of” the
 2 “offending content.” *See Roommates*, 521 F.3d at 1162-63 (quoting § 230(f)(3)).

3 For its part, Paragraph (2) describes a separate immunity. It states:

4 No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be held liable on account
 5 of —

6 (A) any action voluntarily taken in good faith to restrict access to or
 7 availability of material that the provider or user considers to be obscene,
 8 lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise
 9 objectionable, whether or not such material is constitutionally protected;
 10 or

11 (B) any action taken to enable or make available to information
 12 content providers or others the technical means to restrict access to
 13 material described in paragraph [A].

14 47 U.S.C. § 230(c)(2).*

15 The problem Congress sought to solve in Section 230(c) arose from a New York state
 16 trial court’s ruling that an internet service provider that had voluntarily deleted some
 17 messages from an online message board was then “legally responsible for the content of
 18 defamatory messages that it failed to delete.” *See Roommates*, 521 F.3d at 1163 (discussing
 19 *Stratton Oakmont, Inc. v. Prodigy Servs. Co.*, No. 31063/94, 1995 WL 323710 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. May
 20 24, 1995)). The statute responded by “immuniz[ing] the *removal* of user-generated content,
 21 not the *creation* of content.” *Id.* That is, Section 230 “provides ‘Good Samaritan’ protections
 22 from civil liability for providers . . . of an interactive computer service for actions to restrict
 23 . . . access to objectionable online material. One of the specific purposes of this section is to
 24 overrule *Stratton* . . . which . . . treated such providers . . . as publishers or speakers of content
 25 that is not their own because they have restricted access to objectionable material.”
 26 H.R. Rep. No. 104-458 (1996) (Conf. Rep.), *as reprinted in* 1996 U.S.C.C.A.N. 10.

27 * The text of Paragraph (2)(B) refers to “the material described in paragraph (1),” but
 28 the Ninth Circuit “take[s] it that the reference to the ‘material described in paragraph (1)’ is
 a typographical error, and that instead the reference should be to . . . § 230(c)(2)(A),”
 because “Paragraph (1) pertains to the treatment of a publisher or speaker and has nothing
 to do with ‘material,’ whereas subparagraph (A) pertains to and describes material.” *Zango,*
Inc. v. Kaspersky Lab, Inc., 568 F.3d 1169, 1173 n.5 (9th Cir. 2009).

1 According to the Ninth Circuit, Section 230(c)(1) shields the defendant from a claim
2 wherever “the duty that the plaintiff alleges the defendant violated derives from the
3 defendant’s status or conduct as a ‘publisher or speaker.’” *Barnes v. Yahoo!, Inc.*, 570 F.3d
4 1096, 1102 (9th Cir. 2009). In that context, the Ninth Circuit views “publication” as
5 “involv[ing] reviewing, editing, and deciding whether to publish or to withdraw from
6 publication third-party content.” *Id.* The Ninth Circuit has remarked in an *en banc* opinion
7 that “any activity that can be boiled down to deciding whether to exclude material that third
8 parties seek to post online is perforce immune” under Section 230(c)(1). *Roommates*, 521 F.3d
9 at 1170-71.

10 The Ninth Circuit has described one of the policies behind the liability shield as
11 promotion of speech—that is, to “avoid the chilling effect upon Internet free speech that
12 would be occasioned by the imposition of tort liability upon companies that do not create
13 potentially harmful messages but are simply intermediaries for their delivery.” *Doe v. Internet*
14 *Brands, Inc.*, 824 F.3d 846, 852 (9th Cir. 2016) (quoting *Delfino v. Agilent Techs., Inc.*, 145
15 Cal. App. 4th 790, 52 Cal. Rptr. 3d 376, 387 (Cal. Ct. App. 2006)). In enacting Section 230(c),
16 Congress made findings describing online platforms as offering “a forum for a true diversity
17 of political discourse, unique opportunities for cultural development, and myriad avenues for
18 intellectual activity.” § 230(a)(3). Accordingly, “the policy of the United States” is “to
19 preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet and
20 other interactive computer services, *unfettered by Federal or State regulation.*” § 230(b)(2)
21 (emphasis added). To be sure, Congress also determined that it was the policy of the United
22 States “to ensure vigorous enforcement of *Federal criminal laws* to deter and punish trafficking
23 in obscenity, stalking, and harassment by means of computer.” § 230(b)(5) (emphasis added).
24 But in balancing the various interests, Congress sought “not to deter harmful online speech
25 through the separate route of imposing *tort liability* on companies that serve as intermediaries
26 for other parties’ potentially injurious messages.” *Zeran v. Am. Online, Inc.*, 129 F.3d 327, 330-
27 31 (4th Cir. 1997) (Wilkinson, C.J.) (emphasis added).

II. Proceedings In Plaintiffs' Case

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The instant Plaintiffs are “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual or Queer internet content creators” who make videos, including many that “discuss issues which affect members of the LGBTQ+ community.” 2d Am. Compl. ¶¶ 1, 41 (Doc. 20) (“SAC”). YouTube, owned by Google, is allegedly the dominant Internet video platform, hosting “roughly 95%” of global “public video-based content,” and “monetizing the free speech and expression of . . . the 2.3 billion people who now use” it. SAC ¶ 15. Plaintiffs allegedly contracted with YouTube, licensing it to distribute their videos while agreeing that YouTube retained various rights—including the right to enforce its community guidelines, and the right to determine “in its sole discretion” whether the videos contained “material . . . in violation of” the agreement. Rule 12(b)(6) Opp. 4 (Doc. 28); *see* SAC ¶¶ 10, 117(d), 288. According to Plaintiffs, YouTube “monetize[s]” the videos by selling advertisements for display along with them, and some Plaintiffs have paid YouTube to promote their videos (individually or grouped into channels) to potential viewers. SAC ¶¶ 55, 89, 131. YouTube allegedly retains “unfettered and absolute discretion to restrict the viewership, reach, and monetization of [the] videos.” SAC ¶ 118.

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One way that YouTube allegedly exercises that discretion is through its “Restricted Mode,” which works “much like a curtain” to “block[] access” by “younger, sensitive audiences to video content that contains certain specifically enumerated ‘mature’ aspects.” SAC ¶ 77. When a viewer turns on “Restricted Mode” for a personal account (or when it is activated by a parent or system administrator, such as one acting on behalf of a public library, school, or other work place) and lands on a video placed in “Restricted Mode,” instead of showing the video, YouTube displays a warning, stating that the video is unavailable and that to view the video the viewer would “need to disable Restricted Mode.” SAC ¶¶ 77-79, 83, 343. YouTube allegedly tells viewers who inquire that videos are placed in “Restricted Mode” when they include, among other things, “[o]verly detailed conversations about or depictions of sex or sexual activity,” “inappropriate language, including profanity,” or other sensitive

1 content. SAC ¶¶ 26, 85, 344, 345, 346. “On average, 1.5–2% of users view YouTube
2 through Restricted Mode.” *Prager Univ.*, 951 F.3d at 996.

3 YouTube has allegedly styled itself (including in testimony to Congress) as a “neutral
4 public forum.” SAC ¶¶ 61, 287, 342. But Plaintiffs allege that YouTube has used its “power
5 over filtering” as a “censorship power to silence and crush Plaintiffs because they identify
6 [as] LGBTQ+ and express LGBTQ+ viewpoints.” SAC ¶ 21. In particular, Plaintiffs allege
7 that YouTube placed some of their videos into “Restricted Mode,” or rendered certain videos
8 ineligible for generation of advertising revenue by “demonetizing” them, justified by
9 YouTube’s alleged false statements that the videos contained “inappropriate” or “otherwise
10 objectionable” content. SAC ¶¶ 3, 26, 151, 345-47. According to Plaintiffs, the episodes of
11 “Restricted Mode” and demonetization misuse they allege are not isolated; rather, YouTube
12 purportedly has a “‘company policy’ of not selling ads to ‘gay’ content creators because the
13 ‘gay thing’ render[s] [their] video[s] ‘shocking’ and sexually explicit regardless of the actual
14 content of the video[s].” SAC ¶ 20; *see* SAC ¶¶ 122, 134, 146; SAC Ex. A (transcript of
15 communication with Google Support staff in Bangalore, India allegedly describing policy).

16 Plaintiffs seek a declaration that 47 U.S.C. § 230(c) violates the First and Fourteenth
17 Amendments; they allege that applying the statute as a bar on their claims would be “both
18 an unconstitutional restraint on Plaintiffs’ First Amendment rights to freedom of petition
19 and speech, and a violation of equal protection of law under the Fourteenth Amendment.”
20 SAC ¶ 261; *see* SAC ¶¶ 280-82. Plaintiffs also assert various claims against YouTube,
21 including two federal statutory claims—one alleging that YouTube engaged in
22 unconstitutional “[v]iewpoint-[b]ased [d]iscrimination” remediable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983
23 (SAC ¶¶ 283-303), and the other alleging that YouTube engaged in false advertising and false
24 association in violation of the Lanham Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1125 *et seq.* (SAC ¶¶ 337-48).

25 This Court has not yet certified any constitutional question under 28 U.S.C. § 2403
26 and Rule 5.1. On March 9, 2020, this Court endorsed a stipulation providing the United
27 States until April 24, 2020 to determine whether to intervene and to file a brief, if any. Doc.

1 32. On the Government’s motion, the Court later enlarged the time for the United States to
 2 intervene to May 8, 2020. Doc. 44.

3 ARGUMENT

4 **I. The Court Should First Decide The Potentially Dispositive Statutory Issues** 5 **Because They May Obviate The Need To Address Plaintiffs’** 6 **Constitutional Challenge**

7 As an initial matter, this Court should not address the constitutionality of Section
 8 230(c) unless it first determines that the pending motion to dismiss cannot be resolved on
 9 non-constitutional grounds. “If there is one doctrine more deeply rooted than any other in
 10 the process of constitutional adjudication, it is that we ought not to pass on questions of
 11 constitutionality . . . unless such adjudication is unavoidable.” *Dep’t of Commerce v. U.S. House*
 12 *of Representatives*, 525 U.S. 316, 343 (1999) (quoting *Spector Motor Serv. v. McLaughlin*, 323 U.S.
 13 101, 105 (1944)); *see id.*, 525 U.S. at 344 (“[I]f a case can be decided on either of two grounds,
 14 one involving a constitutional question, the other a question of statutory construction or
 15 general law, the Court will decide only the latter”) (quoting *Ashwander v. TVA*, 297 U.S. 288,
 347 (1936) (Brandeis, J., concurring)).

16 This Court should adhere to that doctrine of constitutional avoidance here and
 17 decline to rule on the constitutionality of Section 230(c) unless the motion to dismiss cannot
 18 be resolved on other grounds. The United States has intervened solely for the purpose of
 19 defending the constitutionality of Section 230(c) and therefore takes no position on the
 20 merits of the non-constitutional issues. It is apparent, however, that the Court’s resolution
 21 of those issues might obviate the need to consider Section 230(c)’s constitutionality.

22 Here is one example: Plaintiffs assert a Section 1983 claim (SAC ¶¶ 283-303), and
 23 Lanham Act claims for false advertising and false association (SAC ¶¶ 337-48). This Court
 24 might decide that Plaintiffs have not alleged the elements of either of those federal statutory
 25 claims in light of the Ninth Circuit’s twin conclusions in *Prager University* that (1) YouTube is
 26 not a state actor constrained by the First Amendment (951 F.3d at 999), and (2) “YouTube’s
 27 statements concerning its content moderation policies do not constitute ‘commercial
 28 advertising or promotion’” within the meaning of the Lanham Act (*id.* at 999-1000 (quoting

1 15 U.S.C. § 1125(a)(1)(B))). And this Court might similarly decide that Plaintiffs have not
2 alleged the elements of their state law claims.

3 Here is another example: Plaintiffs contend that Section 230(c) does not apply to the
4 misconduct alleged. Rule 12(b)(6) Opp. 13-21. If the Court were to conclude that
5 YouTube's acts as alleged by Plaintiffs do not fit within the terms of either paragraph
6 230(c)(1) or (2), then the statute would not apply, and there would be no occasion for passing
7 on the constitutionality of the statute.

8 In short, where "dispositive" statutory grounds may be available, it is "incumbent on"
9 this Court to examine and decide the case on those grounds first. *Cf. N.Y.C. Transit Auth. v.*
10 *Beazer*, 440 U.S. 568, 582 (1979) ("Before deciding the constitutional question, it was
11 incumbent on [lower courts] to consider whether the statutory grounds might be
12 dispositive.").

13 **II. If The Court Reaches the Question, It Should Conclude That** 14 **Section 230(c) Is Constitutional**

15 If the Court were to reach the constitutional question, it should conclude that
16 Plaintiffs' challenge fails on the merits. Section 230(c) does not regulate or limit Plaintiffs'
17 primary conduct, such as their expressive activities. For example, Plaintiffs do not allege that
18 Section 230(c) prevents them from creating videos or posting them on the Internet. *Cf.*
19 *Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition*, 535 U.S. 234 (2002) (restriction on virtual child pornography
20 challenged by creators of erotic and nudist works). Instead, Section 230(c) establishes a
21 substantive limitation on the liability of certain Internet companies for claims arising from
22 certain specified conduct. But Plaintiffs cannot show that Congress violated Plaintiffs'
23 constitutional rights by making that affirmative defense available here to YouTube, because
24 none of the clauses of the Constitution on which Plaintiffs rely confers on Plaintiffs any right
25 to bring an underlying claim.

26 *First*, Plaintiffs do not identify any valid underlying First Amendment speech claim
27 they could have brought against YouTube had Section 230(c) not been in force. To the
28 contrary, the Ninth Circuit explicitly held in *Prager University* that "YouTube is a private

1 entity” that is not a state actor subject to the constraints of the First Amendment. *See* 951
2 F.3d at 996, 999. The Ninth Circuit observed that “courts have uniformly concluded that
3 digital internet platforms that open their property to user-generated content do not become
4 state actors,” and held that “the state action doctrine precludes constitutional scrutiny of
5 YouTube’s content moderation pursuant to its Terms of Service and Community
6 Guidelines.” *See id.* at 997, 999. The Ninth Circuit thus concluded that “YouTube may be a
7 paradigmatic public square on the Internet, but it is ‘not transformed’ into a state actor solely
8 by ‘provid[ing] a forum for speech.” *Id.* at 997 (quoting *Manhattan Cmty. Access Corp. v.*
9 *Halleck*, 139 S. Ct. 1921, 1930, 1934 (2019)).

10 The Ninth Circuit relied on the “Supreme Court’s state action precedent,” including
11 “its recent teaching in *Halleck*.” *Id.* In that 2019 decision, the Supreme Court explained:
12 “[W]hen a private entity provides a forum for speech, the private entity is not ordinarily
13 constrained by the First Amendment because the private entity is not a state actor. The
14 private entity may thus exercise editorial discretion over the speech and speakers in the
15 forum.” *Halleck*, 139 S. Ct. at 1930. As one illustration, the Court commented: “Benjamin
16 Franklin did not have to operate his newspaper as ‘a stagecoach, with seats for everyone.”
17 *Halleck*, 139 S. Ct. at 1931 (quoting F. Mott, *American Journalism* 55 (3d ed. 1962)). And the
18 Supreme Court made clear that an “imprecise and overbroad phrase” in “passing dicta” in
19 one of its prior decisions “should not be read to suggest that private property owners or
20 private lessees are subject to First Amendment constraints whenever they dedicate their
21 private property to public use or otherwise open their property for speech.” *See id.* at 1931
22 n.3 (discussing *Cornelius v. NAACP Legal Defense & Educ. Fund, Inc.*, 473 U.S. 788, 801 (1985)).
23 No exception to that principle about private property owners applies to YouTube, as the
24 Ninth Circuit reasoned. *See Prager Univ.*, 951 F.3d at 997-99.

25 Because YouTube is not a state actor, its alleged misconduct toward Plaintiffs does
26 not implicate Plaintiffs’ freedom of speech. And because YouTube’s actions do not implicate
27 the First Amendment, the liability protection Section 230(c) affords to YouTube likewise
28

1 does not implicate the First Amendment. Or, put another way, Section 230(c) has not
2 deprived Plaintiffs of any valid underlying Speech Clause claim.

3 *Second*, although Plaintiffs' Petition Clause argument lacks detailed explanation, they
4 appear to contend that the Petition Clause requires Congress to allow them to proceed with
5 their federal and state law claims even though the challenged statute provides an affirmative
6 defense potentially foreclosing those claims. *See* SAC ¶ 281 (alleging that unconstitutionality
7 stems from "Google/YouTube's use of Section 230(c) as a shield to prevent Plaintiffs from
8 *petitioning the courts for relief* to redress violations of their civil, consumer, and contractual rights,
9 including rights which expressly protect Plaintiffs as a class from identity or viewpoint based
10 discrimination and speech restrictions") (emphasis added); *see also* Rule 12(b)(6) Opp. 20-21
11 (contending that "the [Communications Decency Act] cannot be construed to preclude
12 Plaintiffs from *petitioning the Courts* to redress discriminatory and unlawful restrictions their
13 rights to free speech and equal benefits and protection of the law") (emphasis added). That
14 assertion mistakenly posits that the Petition Clause requires the Government to guarantee
15 Plaintiffs the ability to continue to litigate the particular claims for relief they have alleged
16 and to reach a particular outcome (here, denial of the Rule 12(b)(6) motion). Tellingly,
17 Plaintiffs have cited no precedents construing the Petition Clause as guaranteeing such an
18 outcome in litigation.

19 To be sure, the Supreme Court has observed that its "precedents confirm that the
20 Petition Clause protects the right of individuals to appeal to courts and other forums
21 established by the government for resolution of legal disputes. "[T]he right of access to courts
22 for redress of wrongs is an aspect of the First Amendment right to petition the government."
23 *Borough of Duryea v. Guarnieri*, 564 U.S. 379, 387 (2011) (quoting *Sure-Tan, Inc. v. NLRB*, 467
24 U.S. 883, 896-97 (1984)). "A petition," the Supreme Court has further explained, "conveys
25 the special concerns of its author to the government and, in its usual form, requests action
26 by the government to address those concerns." *Guarnieri*, 564 U.S. at 388-89 (citing *Sure-*
27 *Tan*, 467 at 896-97).

1 But the requirements of the Petition Clause have already been fully satisfied in this
2 case, given that, by commencing this action, Plaintiffs “convey[ed] [their] special concerns
3 . . . to the government and . . . request[ed] action by the government to address those
4 concerns.” *See Guarnieri*, 564 U.S. at 388-89. And Plaintiffs remain free to urge Congress to
5 amend the statute. The Petition Clause, however, does not mandate the substantive response
6 to their petition that Plaintiffs desire—*i.e.*, a decision disregarding the affirmative defense set
7 forth in Section 230(c).

8 Were it otherwise, every statute or precedent limiting or preempting previously-
9 available legal remedies would violate the Petition Clause. To the contrary: As the Supreme
10 Court explained in interpreting the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, a
11 State (and, accordingly, the Federal Government) “remains free to create substantive
12 defenses or immunities for use in adjudication—or to eliminate its statutorily created causes
13 of action altogether” *Logan v. Zimmerman Brush Co.*, 455 U.S. 422, 432-33 (1982).

14 Plaintiffs’ Petition Clause argument resembles the Due Process Clause argument the
15 Ninth Circuit rejected in *Ileto v. Glock, Inc.*, 565 F.3d 1126 (9th Cir. 2009). The plaintiffs there
16 challenged a federal statute limiting the liability of firearms manufacturers in certain
17 circumstances. In upholding the law, the Ninth Circuit concluded that Congress’s “legislative
18 determination” creating the liability protection “provides all the process that is due.” *Id.* at
19 1141-42 (internal quotation marks omitted). The court also rejected the contention that the
20 statutory liability limitation deprived the plaintiffs of a property right, reasoning that “a
21 party’s property right in any cause of action does not vest until a final unreviewable judgment
22 is obtained.” *See id.* at 1140-41 (quoting *Fields v. Legacy Health Sys.*, 413 F.3d 943, 956 (9th
23 Cir. 2005)).

24 Although Plaintiffs have not explicitly invoked the Due Process Clause as a basis for
25 their challenge here, they advance an interpretation of the Petition Clause that would
26 effectively circumvent *Logan* and *Ileto*. At least where, as here, Plaintiffs did not obtain a
27 “final unreviewable judgment” in their favor before Section 230(c) came into force, they have
28 no entitlement to the particular legal theories they have alleged. *See Ileto*, 565 F.3d at 1140-

1 41. Congress therefore retained authority to impose limitations on those theories by enacting
2 Section 230(c). *Logan* and *Ileto* thus provide additional confirmation that Plaintiffs’ Petition
3 Clause theory lacks merit.

4 *Third*, Plaintiffs’ equal protection challenge fails for the same reasons as their First
5 Amendment Speech and Petition claims, and does not require separate analysis under Ninth
6 Circuit precedent. “It is generally unnecessary to analyze laws which burden the exercise of
7 First Amendment rights by a class of persons under the equal protection guarantee, because
8 the substantive guarantees of the Amendment serve as the strongest protection against the
9 limitation of these rights.” *Orin v. Barclay*, 272 F.3d 1207, 1213 n.3 (9th Cir. 2001) (quoting
10 John E. Nowak, Ronald D. Rotunda & J. Nelson Young, *Handbook on Constitutional Law*
11 (1978)). On that basis, the Ninth Circuit treated an “equal protection claim as subsumed by,
12 and co-extensive with, [the Section 1983 plaintiff’s] First Amendment claim.” *Id.* This Court
13 need go no further in rejecting Plaintiffs’ equal protection theory.

14 **CONCLUSION**

15 For the foregoing reasons, the Court should decide Defendants’ Rule 12(b)(6) motion
16 without reaching any constitutional question if possible. If the Court reaches Plaintiffs’
17 challenge to the constitutionality of 47 U.S.C. § 230(c), it should reject it.

18 DATED: May 8, 2020

Respectfully submitted,
19 JOSEPH H. HUNT
Assistant Attorney General

20 ERIC WOMACK
21 Assistant Branch Director

22 INDRANEEL SUR
23 Trial Attorney

24 By: /s/ Indraneel Sur
25 INDRANEEL SUR

26 U.S. Department of Justice
27 Counsel for the United States of America

Exhibit “D”

EXECUTIVE ORDER

PREVENTING ONLINE CENSORSHIP

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. Free speech is the bedrock of American democracy. Our Founding Fathers protected this sacred right with the First Amendment to the Constitution. The freedom to express and debate ideas is the foundation for all of our rights as a free people. In a country that has long cherished the freedom of expression, we cannot allow a limited number of online platforms to hand pick the speech that Americans may access and convey on the internet. This practice is fundamentally un-American and anti-democratic. When large, powerful social media companies censor opinions with which they disagree, they exercise a dangerous power. They cease functioning as passive bulletin boards, and ought to be viewed and treated as content creators.

The growth of online platforms in recent years raises important questions about applying the ideals of the First Amendment to modern communications technology. Today, many Americans follow the news, stay in touch with friends and family, and share their views on current events through social media and other online platforms. As a result, these platforms function in many ways as a 21st century equivalent of the public square.

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube wield immense, if not unprecedented, power to shape the interpretation of public events; to censor, delete, or disappear information; and to control what people see or do not see.

As President, I have made clear my commitment to free and open debate on the internet. Such debate is just as important online as it is in our universities, our town halls, and our homes. It is essential to sustaining our democracy.

Online platforms are engaging in selective censorship that is harming our national discourse. Tens of thousands of Americans have reported, among other troubling behaviors, online platforms "flagging" content as inappropriate, even though it does not violate any stated terms of service; making unannounced and unexplained changes to company policies that have the effect of disfavoring certain viewpoints; and deleting content and entire accounts with no warning, no rationale, and no recourse.

Twitter now selectively decides to place a warning label on certain tweets in a manner that clearly reflects political bias. As has been reported, Twitter seems never to have placed such a label on another politician's tweet. As recently as last week, Representative Adam Schiff was continuing to mislead his followers by peddling the long-disproved Russian Collusion Hoax, and Twitter did not flag those tweets. Unsurprisingly, its officer in charge of so-called "Site Integrity" has flaunted his political bias in his own tweets.

At the same time online platforms are invoking inconsistent, irrational, and groundless justifications to censor or otherwise restrict Americans' speech here at home, several online platforms are profiting from and promoting the aggression and disinformation spread by foreign governments like China. One United States company, for example, created a search engine for the Chinese Communist Party that would have blacklisted searches for "human rights," hid data unfavorable to the Chinese Communist Party, and tracked users determined appropriate for surveillance. It also established research partnerships in China that provide direct benefits to the Chinese military. Other companies have accepted advertisements paid for by the Chinese government that spread false information about China's mass imprisonment of religious minorities, thereby enabling these abuses of human rights. They have also amplified China's propaganda abroad, including by allowing Chinese

government officials to use their platforms to spread misinformation regarding the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to undermine pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.

As a Nation, we must foster and protect diverse viewpoints in today's digital communications environment where all Americans can and should have a voice. We must seek transparency and accountability from online platforms, and encourage standards and tools to protect and preserve the integrity and openness of American discourse and freedom of expression.

Sec. 2. Protections Against Online Censorship. (a) It is the policy of the United States to foster clear ground rules promoting free and open debate on the internet. Prominent among the ground rules governing that debate is the immunity from liability created by section 230(c) of the Communications Decency Act (section 230(c)). 47 U.S.C. 230(c). It is the policy of the United States that the scope of that immunity should be clarified: the immunity should not extend beyond its text and purpose to provide protection for those who purport to provide users a forum for free and open speech, but in reality use their power over a vital means of communication to engage in deceptive or pretextual actions stifling free and open debate by censoring certain viewpoints.

Section 230(c) was designed to address early court decisions holding that, if an online platform restricted access to some content posted by others, it would thereby become a "publisher" of all the content posted on its site for purposes of torts such as defamation. As the title of section 230(c) makes clear, the provision provides limited liability "protection" to a provider of an interactive computer service (such as an online platform) that engages in "'Good Samaritan' blocking" of harmful content. In particular, the Congress sought to provide protections for online platforms that attempted to protect minors from harmful content and intended to ensure that such providers would not be discouraged from taking down harmful material. The provision was also intended to further the express vision of the Congress that the internet is a "forum for a true diversity of political discourse." 47 U.S.C. 230(a)(3). The limited protections provided by the statute should be construed with these purposes in mind.

In particular, subparagraph (c)(2) expressly addresses protections from "civil liability" and specifies that an interactive computer service provider may not be made liable "on account of" its decision in "good faith" to restrict access to content that it considers to be "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing or otherwise objectionable." It is the policy of the United States to ensure that, to the maximum extent permissible under the law, this provision is not distorted to provide liability protection for online platforms that -- far from acting in "good faith" to remove objectionable content -- instead engage in deceptive or pretextual actions (often contrary to their stated terms of service) to stifle viewpoints with which they disagree. Section 230 was not intended to allow a handful of companies to grow into titans controlling vital avenues for our national discourse under the guise of promoting open forums for debate, and then to provide those behemoths blanket immunity when they use their power to censor content and silence viewpoints that they dislike. When an interactive computer service provider removes or restricts access to content and its actions do not meet the criteria of subparagraph (c)(2)(A), it is engaged in editorial conduct. It is the policy of the United States that such a provider should properly lose the limited liability shield of subparagraph (c)(2)(A) and be exposed to liability like any traditional editor and publisher that is not an online provider.

(b) To advance the policy described in subsection (a) of this section, all executive departments and agencies should ensure that their application of section 230(c) properly reflects the narrow purpose of the section and take all appropriate actions in this regard. In addition, within 60 days of the date of this order, the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), in

consultation with the Attorney General, and acting through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), shall file a petition for rulemaking with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requesting that the FCC expeditiously propose regulations to clarify:

- (i) the interaction between subparagraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of section 230, in particular to clarify and determine the circumstances under which a provider of an interactive computer service that restricts access to content in a manner not specifically protected by subparagraph (c)(2)(A) may also not be able to claim protection under subparagraph (c)(1), which merely states that a provider shall not be treated as a publisher or speaker for making third-party content available and does not address the provider's responsibility for its own editorial decisions;
- (ii) the conditions under which an action restricting access to or availability of material is not "taken in good faith" within the meaning of subparagraph (c)(2)(A) of section 230, particularly whether actions can be "taken in good faith" if they are:
 - (A) deceptive, pretextual, or inconsistent with a provider's terms of service; or
 - (B) taken after failing to provide adequate notice, reasoned explanation, or a meaningful opportunity to be heard; and
- (iii) any other proposed regulations that the NTIA concludes may be appropriate to advance the policy described in subsection (a) of this section.

Sec. 3. Protecting Federal Taxpayer Dollars from Financing Online Platforms That Restrict Free Speech. (a) The head of each executive department and agency (agency) shall review its agency's Federal spending on advertising and marketing paid to online platforms. Such review shall include the amount of money spent, the online platforms that receive Federal dollars, and the statutory authorities available to restrict their receipt of advertising dollars. (b) Within 30 days of the date of this order, the head of each agency shall report its findings to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

(c) The Department of Justice shall review the viewpoint-based speech restrictions imposed by each online platform identified in the report described in subsection (b) of this section and assess whether any online platforms are problematic vehicles for government speech due to viewpoint discrimination, deception to consumers, or other bad practices.

Sec. 4. Federal Review of Unfair or Deceptive Acts or Practices. (a) It is the policy of the United States that large online platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, as the critical means of promoting the free flow of speech and ideas today, should not restrict protected speech. The Supreme Court has noted that social media sites, as the modern public square, "can provide perhaps the most powerful mechanisms available to a private citizen to make his or her voice heard." *Packingham v. North Carolina*, 137 S. Ct. 1730, 1737 (2017). Communication through these channels has become important for meaningful participation in American democracy, including to petition elected leaders. These sites are providing an important forum to the public for others to engage in free expression and debate. Cf. *PruneYard Shopping Center v. Robins*, 447 U.S. 74, 85-89 (1980).

(b) In May of 2019, the White House launched a Tech Bias Reporting tool to allow Americans to report incidents of online censorship. In just weeks, the White House received over 16,000 complaints of online platforms censoring or otherwise taking action against users based on their political viewpoints. The White House will submit such complaints received to the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

(c) The FTC shall consider taking action, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law, to prohibit unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce, pursuant to section 45 of title 15, United States Code. Such unfair or deceptive acts or practice may include

practices by entities covered by section 230 that restrict speech in ways that do not align with those entities' public representations about those practices.

(d) For large online platforms that are vast arenas for public debate, including the social media platform Twitter, the FTC shall also, consistent with its legal authority, consider whether complaints allege violations of law that implicate the policies set forth in section 4(a) of this order. The FTC shall consider developing a report describing such complaints and making the report publicly available, consistent with applicable law.

Sec. 5. State Review of Unfair or Deceptive Acts or Practices and Anti-Discrimination Laws.

(a) The Attorney General shall establish a working group regarding the potential enforcement of State statutes that prohibit online platforms from engaging in unfair or deceptive acts or practices. The working group shall also develop model legislation for consideration by legislatures in States where existing statutes do not protect Americans from such unfair and deceptive acts and practices. The working group shall invite State Attorneys General for discussion and consultation, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law.

(b) Complaints described in section 4(b) of this order will be shared with the working group, consistent with applicable law. The working group shall also collect publicly available information regarding the following:

(i) increased scrutiny of users based on the other users they choose to follow, or their interactions with other users;

(ii) algorithms to suppress content or users based on indications of political alignment or viewpoint;

(iii) differential policies allowing for otherwise impermissible behavior, when committed by accounts associated with the Chinese Communist Party or other anti-democratic associations or governments;

(iv) reliance on third-party entities, including contractors, media organizations, and individuals, with indicia of bias to review content; and

(v) acts that limit the ability of users with particular viewpoints to earn money on the platform compared with other users similarly situated.

Sec. 6. Legislation. The Attorney General shall develop a proposal for Federal legislation that would be useful to promote the policy objectives of this order.

Sec. 7. Definition. For purposes of this order, the term "online platform" means any website or application that allows users to create and share content or engage in social networking, or any general search engine.

Sec. 8. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

DONALD J. TRUMP
THE WHITE HOUSE,
May 28, 2020.

EXHIBIT "E"

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
SAN JOSE DIVISION

DIVINO GROUP LLC, ET AL.,

PLAINTIFFS,

CASE NO. CV-19-4749-VKD

VS.

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

GOOGLE LLC, ET AL.,

JUNE 2, 2020

DEFENDANT.

PAGES 1 - 51

TRANSCRIPT OF ZOOM PROCEEDINGS
BEFORE THE HONORABLE VIRGINIA K. DEMARCHI
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S BY ZOOM

FOR THE PLAINTIFFS: BROWNE GEORGE ROSS LLP
BY: PETER OBSTLER
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SUITE 1280
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94104

BY: DEBI ANN RAMOS
801 S. FIGUEROA ST., SUITE 2000
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90067

FOR THE DEFENDANTS: WILSON SONSINI GOODRICH & ROSATI
BY: BRIAN M. WILLEN
1301 AVENUE OF THE AMERICA, 40TH
FLOOR
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10019-6022

BY: LAUREN G. WHITE
650 PAGE MILL ROAD
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94304-1050

(APPEARANCES CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE.)

OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER: IRENE L. RODRIGUEZ, CSR, RMR, CRR
CERTIFICATE NUMBER 8074

PROCEEDINGS RECORDED BY MECHANICAL STENOGRAPHY,
TRANSCRIPT PRODUCED WITH COMPUTER.

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A P P E A R A N C E S BY ZOOM: (CONT'D)

FOR INTERESTED PARTY:

US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
CIVIL DIVISION, FEDERAL PROGRAMS BRANCH
BY: INDRANEEL SUR
1100 L ST.
RM. 12010
WASHINGTON, DC 20530

1 SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

JUNE 2, 2020

2 P R O C E E D I N G S

10:24AM 3 (COURT CONVENED AT 10:24 A.M.)

10:24AM 4 THE CLERK: THE NEXT MATTER IS DIVINO GROUP VERSUS
10:24AM 5 GOOGLE, CASE NUMBER 19-CV-4749.

10:24AM 6 THE COURT: GOOD MORNING. I'M WAITING FOR THE PRIOR
10:24AM 7 MATTER AND ALSO WITH OUR TECHNOLOGY.

10:24AM 8 WHO WILL BE SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF DIVINO GROUP TODAY?

10:24AM 9 MR. OBSTLER, YOU'RE ON MUTE.

10:24AM 10 MR. OBSTLER: SORRY ABOUT THAT, YOUR HONOR. THIS IS
10:24AM 11 THE MOST NERVE-RACKING PART OF THE WHOLE HEARING IS TRYING TO
10:24AM 12 GET THIS THING TO WORK.

10:24AM 13 (LAUGHTER.)

10:24AM 14 MR. OBSTLER: PETER OBSTLER, MYSELF, WILL BE
10:24AM 15 SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE DIVINO PLAINTIFFS, YOUR HONOR.

10:24AM 16 THE COURT: OKAY. WHO WILL BE SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF
10:24AM 17 GOOGLE TODAY?

10:24AM 18 MR. WILLEN: GOOD MORNING, YOUR HONOR. THIS IS
10:24AM 19 BRIAN WILLEN. ME AND MY COLLEAGUE, MS. WHITE, WILL BOTH BE
10:24AM 20 SPEAKING FOR GOOGLE.

10:24AM 21 I WILL BE ADDRESSING ANY ISSUES RELATED TO SECTION 230,
10:24AM 22 AND MS. WHITE WILL BE ADDRESSING ANY ISSUES RELATED TO THE
10:24AM 23 UNDERLYING CAUSES OF ACTION.

10:24AM 24 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

10:24AM 25 AND I DO HAVE MR. SUR ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES.

10:25AM 1 ALL RIGHT. SO WE ARE HERE ON THE DEFENDANTS' MOTION TO
10:25AM 2 DISMISS THE SECOND AMENDED COMPLAINT.

10:25AM 3 I WILL HEAR FROM ALL PARTIES, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO START
10:25AM 4 JUST BY IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES THAT I AM MOST INTERESTED IN
10:25AM 5 HEARING ABOUT, AND THEN I'LL LET YOU MAKE YOUR ARGUMENTS, AND I
10:25AM 6 HAVE SOME VERY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.

10:25AM 7 SO PLAINTIFFS HAVE EIGHT CLAIMS FOR RELIEF, REALLY SEVEN
10:25AM 8 CLAIMS FOR RELIEF SINCE THE EIGHTH ONE IS A REQUEST FOR
10:25AM 9 DECLARATORY RELIEF AND MORE OF A REQUEST FOR A REMEDY.

10:25AM 10 MY PRINCIPAL CONCERN IS THE PRAGER DECISION. IT DOES SEEM
10:25AM 11 THAT THE NINTH CIRCUIT'S DECISION IN PRAGER IS DISPOSITIVE WITH
10:25AM 12 RESPECT TO THE FEDERAL CLAIMS AND PERHAPS THE CALIFORNIA
10:25AM 13 CONSTITUTION CLAIM BECAUSE OF THE FINDING THAT THE
10:25AM 14 NINTH CIRCUIT MADE THAT GOOGLE AND YOUTUBE ARE NOT STATE
10:25AM 15 ACTORS. THAT CONCLUSION SEEMS TO ELIMINATE THOSE CLAIMS.

10:25AM 16 THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION CLAIMS ARE ALSO PREMISED ON
10:26AM 17 THE IDEA THAT GOOGLE AND YOUTUBE ARE STATE ACTORS, SO THAT ONE
10:26AM 18 ALSO SEEMS TO BE ELIMINATED BY THIS DECISION.

10:26AM 19 AND THEN WITH RESPECT TO THE LANHAM ACT CLAIM, THE FINDING
10:26AM 20 THAT THE TERMS OF SERVICE AND COMMUNITY GUIDELINES ARE NOT
10:26AM 21 COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING OR PROMOTION AND THAT THE OTHER
10:26AM 22 STATEMENTS THAT ARE CONTAINED -- THAT ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN THE
10:26AM 23 SECOND AMENDED COMPLAINT ARE OPERATIONAL OR PUFFERY MEANS THAT
10:26AM 24 THE PLAINTIFFS COULD NOT PREVAIL ON THE LANHAM ACT CLAIM.

10:26AM 25 SO I WOULD LIKE TO UNDERSTAND THE PARTIES' VIEWS ON THE

10:26AM 1 SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAGER. THAT'S THE FIRST THING.

10:26AM 2 AND THE SECOND ITEM THAT CAUGHT MY ATTENTION WAS THE
10:26AM 3 UNRAH ACT CLAIM WHICH DOESN'T HAVE -- DOESN'T GIVE MUCH
10:26AM 4 DISCUSSION IN THE PARTIES' PAPERS, BUT HERE'S MY QUESTION ABOUT
10:26AM 5 THE UNRAH ACT CLAIM, OR QUESTIONS.

10:26AM 6 DOES IT ACTUALLY APPLY TO THE GOOGLE YOUTUBE PLATFORM?
10:26AM 7 AND IF SO, UNDER WHAT SPECIFIC THEORY?

10:26AM 8 IF I CONSTRUE THE SECOND AMENDED COMPLAINT AS ALLEGING AN
10:27AM 9 UNWRITTEN POLICY TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THE LGBTQ CONTENT
10:27AM 10 CREATORS, IS THAT REALLY WITHIN THE SCOPE OF PUBLISHING
10:27AM 11 ACTIVITY UNDER SECTION 230(C)(1) OR (C)(2), WHICH HAS A GOOD
10:27AM 12 FAITH REQUIREMENT?

10:27AM 13 IS THAT KIND OF AN UNWRITTEN POLICY SUFFICIENT TO STATE A
10:27AM 14 CLAIM EVEN IF GOOGLE AND YOUTUBE'S OFFICIAL WRITTEN POLICY IS
10:27AM 15 VIEWPOINT NEUTRAL?

10:27AM 16 SO I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS AROUND THE UNRAH ACT CLAIM THAT I
10:27AM 17 WOULD LIKE THE PARTIES TO FOCUS ON.

10:27AM 18 AND THEN FINALLY I DID SEE THAT THE PLAINTIFFS DID FILE
10:27AM 19 YESTERDAY A REQUEST FOR JUDICIAL NOTICE ABOUT THE RECENT
10:27AM 20 EXECUTIVE ORDER, AND I'LL PERMIT THE PARTIES TO ADDRESS THAT,
10:27AM 21 ALTHOUGH I DO NOT SEE HOW THAT HAS ANY BEARING ON THE MOTION TO
10:27AM 22 DISMISS.

10:27AM 23 BUT THOSE ARE MY HIGH-LEVEL OBSERVATIONS AND FLAGGING
10:27AM 24 THOSE ISSUES FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION, BUT I WILL LET YOU ARGUE
10:28AM 25 HOWEVER YOU WOULD LIKE TO ARGUE.

10:28AM 1 AND SINCE IT'S THE DEFENDANTS' MOTION, I WILL GO AHEAD AND
10:28AM 2 LET GOOGLE START.

10:28AM 3 SO MR. WILLEN.

10:28AM 4 MR. WILLEN: YES. THANK YOU, YOUR HONOR.

10:28AM 5 I THINK I SHOULD PROBABLY TAKE YOUR FIRST SET OF QUESTIONS
10:28AM 6 FIRST WHICH HAS TO DO WITH THE IMPACT OF THE NINTH CIRCUIT'S
10:28AM 7 DECISION IN PRAGER, AND SINCE I THINK THAT RELATES TO THE
10:28AM 8 MERITS OF THE CAUSES OF ACTION RATHER THAN SECTION 230, I WILL
10:28AM 9 LET MY COLLEAGUE, MS. WHITE, ADDRESS THAT IN THE FIRST
10:28AM 10 INSTANCE.

10:28AM 11 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. VERY WELL.

10:28AM 12 MS. WHITE: THANK YOU, YOUR HONOR.

10:28AM 13 TAKING YOUR QUESTIONS IN ORDER, I'LL BEGIN WITH THE FIRST
10:28AM 14 AMENDMENT. WE ABSOLUTELY AGREE WITH YOUR SUGGESTION THAT THE
10:28AM 15 NINTH CIRCUIT'S DECISION FORECLOSES PLAINTIFFS' FIRST AMENDMENT
10:28AM 16 CLAIM.

10:28AM 17 THEIR CLAIM IS PREDICATED ON AN INFRINGEMENT OF THEIR OWN
10:28AM 18 FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS, AND OF COURSE THE CASE LAW IS EXTREMELY
10:29AM 19 CLEAR FOLLOWING THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION IN HALLECK AND NOW
10:29AM 20 THE NINTH CIRCUIT'S DECISION IN PRAGER, WHICH WAS BROUGHT BY
10:29AM 21 COUNSEL FOR PLAINTIFFS HERE AND ASSERTED CLAIMS BASED ON THE
10:29AM 22 SAME PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ON YOUTUBE'S PLATFORM THAT ARE AT
10:29AM 23 ISSUE IN THIS CASE.

10:29AM 24 THERE'S SIMPLY NO PATH FORWARD IN LIGHT OF THE COURT'S
10:29AM 25 HOLDING TO -- FOR THE COURT TO CONCLUDE THAT YOUTUBE IS A STATE

10:29AM 1 ACTOR.

10:29AM 2 AND PLAINTIFFS HAVE FILED A SURREPLY ADDRESSING THAT
10:29AM 3 DECISION, ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT ADDRESS JUDGE KOH'S UNDERLYING
10:29AM 4 DECISION THAT THE NINTH CIRCUIT AFFIRMED IN THEIR OPPOSITION
10:29AM 5 BRIEF.

10:29AM 6 AND IN THEIR SURREPLY THEY CLAIM THAT THIS CASE IS
10:30AM 7 DIFFERENT BECAUSE THEY HAVE ARTICULATED A DIFFERENT STATE
10:30AM 8 ACTION THEORY UNDER THE SO-CALLED ENDORSEMENT TEST UNDER THE
10:30AM 9 SUPREME COURT SKINNER DECISION.

10:30AM 10 BUT WHETHER THE COURT CONSIDERS THE ENDORSEMENT TEST OR
10:30AM 11 THE PUBLIC FUNCTION TEST THAT WAS ARGUED IN PRAGER, THE
10:30AM 12 PARTY -- THE PLAINTIFFS MUST SHOW THAT IN ORDER TO SHOW STATE
10:30AM 13 ACTION, THAT THE CONDUCT THAT ALLEGEDLY DEPRIVED THEM OF THEIR
10:30AM 14 RIGHTS CAN FAIRLY BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE STATE OR THE GOVERNMENT.

10:30AM 15 AND THERE IS NO BASIS TO ARGUE THAT YOUTUBE, IN MONITORING
10:30AM 16 ITS SERVICE AND MODERATING CONTENT ON ITS SERVICE WAS SOMEHOW
10:30AM 17 ACTING WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S ENDORSEMENT. AND SECTION 230 BY
10:30AM 18 ITS EXPRESS TERMS, AND THE LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CONFIRMS, THAT
10:31AM 19 THE GOVERNMENT WAS, IN FACT, SEEKING TO TAKE ITSELF OUT OF THE
10:31AM 20 PROCESS OF CONTENT MODERATION ONLINE. SO THERE IS NO BASIS FOR
10:31AM 21 THE COURT TO CONCLUDE THAT SECTION 230 SOMEHOW PUTS A THUMB ON
10:31AM 22 THE SCALE IN FAVOR OF THE CONTENT MODERATION DECISIONS THAT
10:31AM 23 YOUTUBE MADE WITH RESPECT TO THE PLAINTIFFS' CONTENT HERE.

10:31AM 24 THE COURT: IT SEEMS ALMOST LIKE AN ABSENCE OF
10:31AM 25 ENDORSEMENT, SORT OF AN EXPLICIT NON-ENDORSEMENT OF ANY

10:31AM 1 PARTICULAR MONITORING OR POLICING OR CENSORSHIP OR RESTRICTION.
10:31AM 2 IT'S LEAVING IT UP TO THE PLATFORM OR THE SERVICE PROVIDER IN
10:31AM 3 THIS CASE.

10:31AM 4 SO I TAKE YOUR POINT ABOUT THE ENDORSEMENT THEORY. IT
10:31AM 5 DOESN'T SEEM TO FIT, BUT I WILL HEAR FROM THE PLAINTIFFS ON
10:31AM 6 THAT.

10:31AM 7 OKAY. SO IN YOUR VIEW -- IN DEFENDANTS' VIEW DOES THE
10:32AM 8 PRAGER DECISION TAKE CARE OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT CLAIM AS WELL
10:32AM 9 AS THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION CLAIM?

10:32AM 10 I MEAN, IT DOESN'T SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS THE CALIFORNIA
10:32AM 11 CONSTITUTION, THE NINTH CIRCUIT DOES NOT. THAT WAS THE
10:32AM 12 PRAGER II DECISION.

10:32AM 13 MR. WILLEN: THAT'S RIGHT, YOUR HONOR. WE THINK IT
10:32AM 14 DOES. CALIFORNIA STATE COURTS HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT THE
10:32AM 15 CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION HAS A STATE ACTION REQUIREMENT JUST
10:32AM 16 LIKE THE FIRST AMENDMENT.

10:32AM 17 AND AS THE NINTH CIRCUIT IN PRAGER HELD, THAT TO FIND A
10:32AM 18 PRIVATE PLATFORM INVOLVED IN HOSTING EXPRESSIVE CONDUCT A STATE
10:32AM 19 ACTOR WOULD ESSENTIALLY BE A PARADIGM SHIFT AND THAT HOLDING
10:32AM 20 BEARS ON THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION CLAIM AS WELL.

10:32AM 21 NOW, PLAINTIFFS HAVE INVOKED THIS NARROW AND 40-YEAR-OLD
10:33AM 22 EXCEPTION ARTICULATED BY THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT IN
10:33AM 23 ROBINS VERSUS PRUNEYARD, BUT THAT DECISION WAS APPLIED TO REAL
10:33AM 24 PROPERTY GIVEN THE NATURE OF REAL PROPERTY AND HAS NEVER BEEN
10:33AM 25 EXTENDED BEYOND THE SCOPE OF REAL PROPERTY.

10:33AM 1 AND, IN FACT, EVERY CASE THAT HAS CONSIDERED SIMILAR
10:33AM 2 EFFORTS TO EXPAND ITS SCOPE TO ONLINE SERVICES HAS REJECTED
10:33AM 3 THOSE EFFORTS. IN ADDITION TO PRAGER II THERE WAS THE DOMEN
10:33AM 4 CASE IN THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK AND JUDGE CHEN IN THE
10:33AM 5 HIQ DECISION.

10:33AM 6 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU.

10:33AM 7 AND THE LANHAM ACT ISSUE?

10:33AM 8 MS. WHITE: YES. ON THAT, YOUR HONOR, I DON'T
10:33AM 9 ENTIRELY UNDERSTAND PLAINTIFFS' ARGUMENTS IN THEIR SURREPLY FOR
10:33AM 10 ATTEMPTING TO DISTINGUISH THE LANHAM ACT, BUT THERE'S
10:33AM 11 ESSENTIALLY FOUR CATEGORIES OF STATEMENTS AT ISSUE IN THEIR
10:34AM 12 CLAIM, AND THEY ALL RELATE TO STATEMENTS THAT THE NINTH CIRCUIT
10:34AM 13 CONSIDERED IN PRAGER, THOSE DEALING WITH THE TERMS OF SERVICE
10:34AM 14 DESCRIPTIONS OF RESTRICTED MODE AND SOME IMPLICIT STATEMENT BUT
10:34AM 15 NO ACTUAL STATEMENT REGARDING THE DECISION TO MAKE CERTAIN OF
10:34AM 16 PLAINTIFFS' VIDEOS UNAVAILABLE IN RESTRICTED MODE.

10:34AM 17 THE NINTH CIRCUIT ADDRESSED EACH OF THOSE CATEGORIES OF
10:34AM 18 STATEMENTS AND CLEARLY HELD THAT NO LANHAM ACT CLAIM COULD
10:34AM 19 PROCEED ON THE BASIS OF ANY OF THEM. THEY ARE NOT MADE IN
10:34AM 20 COMMERCIAL OR PROMOTIONAL CONTEXTS AND THEY, WITH RESPECT TO
10:34AM 21 YOUTUBE'S PROMOTIONAL STATEMENTS AND MISSION STATEMENTS, ARE
10:34AM 22 NOT -- ARE ESSENTIALLY NONACTIONABLE PUFFERY.

10:34AM 23 THE COURT: AND IF GOOGLE WERE TO ACT OR HAVE AN
10:34AM 24 INTERNAL UNWRITTEN POLICY THAT WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THOSE
10:34AM 25 PUBLIC STATEMENTS, WOULD THE ANSWER STILL BE THE SAME UNDER THE

10:35AM 1 LANHAM ACT? DOES IT MATTER? THOSE ARE -- THE STATEMENTS THAT
10:35AM 2 ARE PUBLIC FACING AND DESCRIBE THE PLATFORM AS BEING VIEWPOINT
10:35AM 3 NEUTRAL, THAT'S NOT ADVERTISING, THAT'S NOT PROMOTION, SO IT
10:35AM 4 DOESN'T MATTER IF, IN FACT, THAT'S NOT THE WAY IT WORKS AND
10:35AM 5 THERE'S SOME UNWRITTEN POLICY THAT DISCRIMINATES AGAINST THE
10:35AM 6 LGBT CONTENT CREATORS AND STILL NOT ACTIONABLE UNDER THE
10:35AM 7 LANHAM ACT WOULD BE YOUR VIEW?

10:35AM 8 MS. WHITE: THAT'S RIGHT, YOUR HONOR. TO STATE A
10:35AM 9 CLAIM UNDER THE LANHAM ACT FOR FALSE ADVERTISING, WHICH IS WHAT
10:35AM 10 I UNDERSTAND THE PLAINTIFFS CLAIM TO BE HERE, THEY HAVE TO TIE
10:35AM 11 THE CLAIM TO SOME ACTUAL STATEMENT.

10:35AM 12 SO IMPLICIT OR ABSTRACT MOTIVE IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO STATE
10:35AM 13 A CLAIM UNDER THE LANHAM ACT.

10:35AM 14 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. SO I DID HAVE A QUESTION
10:35AM 15 ABOUT TRYING TO FOCUS IN ON THIS ISSUE OF PLAINTIFFS ALLEGE
10:36AM 16 DISCRIMINATION BASED ON THEIR IDENTITY AS OPPOSED TO CONTENT.

10:36AM 17 AND I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS A QUESTION FOR YOU OR
10:36AM 18 MR. WILLEN BECAUSE IT REALLY DOES GET INTO THE QUESTION OF WHAT
10:36AM 19 IS IMMUNIZED AND WHAT IS NOT.

10:36AM 20 PLAINTIFFS SAY IN THEIR COMPLAINT THAT THEIR CONTENT IS
10:36AM 21 BLOCKED OR RESTRICTED IN SOME WAY NOT BECAUSE OF THE CONTENT
10:36AM 22 ITSELF BUT BECAUSE THE CREATORS OF THE CONTENT ARE GAY OR ARE
10:36AM 23 SEEKING TO HAVE THEIR CONTENT VIEWED BY THE LGBT COMMUNITY, SO
10:36AM 24 THEY'RE TARGETING CONTENT TO THE LGBT COMMUNITY.

10:36AM 25 SO THAT MAKES ME WONDER WHETHER THAT KIND OF CONDUCT IS,

10:36AM 1 AS I ASKED FROM THE BEGINNING, SO IF I CREDIT THAT AS AN
10:36AM 2 ALLEGATION THAT I MUST ACCEPT AS TRUE THAT IT'S A
10:36AM 3 DISCRIMINATION BASED ON IDENTITY, IS THAT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF
10:36AM 4 THE PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION (C) (1)?

10:37AM 5 AND THE SECOND PART IS IF YOU HAVE TO SHOW GOOD FAITH
10:37AM 6 UNDER (C) (2), IS THAT KIND OF DISCRIMINATION, IS THERE A
10:37AM 7 QUESTION WHETHER THAT KIND OF DISCRIMINATION IS NOT GOOD FAITH
10:37AM 8 UNDER (C) (2)?

10:37AM 9 SO THOSE ARE QUESTIONS FOR MR. WILLEN.

10:37AM 10 MR. WILLEN: SURE. I'D BE HAPPY TO ADDRESS THOSE,
10:37AM 11 YOUR HONOR.

10:37AM 12 SO WITH RESPECT TO (C) (1), THE COURT IS NOT WRITING ON A
10:37AM 13 BLANK SLATE HERE. WE'VE HAD A SERIES OF DECISIONS, AT LEAST
10:37AM 14 SIX CASES IN THE LAST TWO OR THREE YEARS ALL OF WHICH HAVE
10:37AM 15 APPLIED SECTION 230(C) (1) TO CLAIMS UNDER VARIOUS
10:37AM 16 DISCRIMINATION LAWS, INCLUDING THE UNRAH ACT.

10:37AM 17 SO, FOR EXAMPLE, THE DOMEN CASE THAT MS. WHITE MENTIONED
10:37AM 18 IN THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK WAS A CLAIM OF THE
10:37AM 19 UNRAH ACT SPECIFICALLY HELD THAT THE STATE, YOU KNOW,
10:37AM 20 DISCRIMINATION LAWS AND CLAIMS ARISING UNDER THEM ARE WITHIN
10:37AM 21 THE SCOPE OF PUBLISHING ACTIVITY AT LEAST IN CERTAIN CONTEXTS
10:38AM 22 UNDER (C) (1).

10:38AM 23 WE HAVE THE SIKHS FOR JUSTICE CASE, JUDGE KOH'S DECISION,
10:38AM 24 WHICH HELD THE SAME THING AS DID TITLE II OF THE FEDERAL CIVIL
10:38AM 25 RIGHTS ACT, AND THAT DECISION WAS AFFIRMED IN AN UNPUBLISHED

10:38AM 1 DECISION BY THE NINTH CIRCUIT, WHICH SPECIFICALLY SAID THERE'S
10:38AM 2 NO, THERE'S NO REASON TO EXEMPT THIS CLAIM FROM SECTION 230.

10:38AM 3 PRAGER HELD THE SAME THING. SIKHS VERSUS FACEBOOK, THE
10:38AM 4 FEDERAL NEWS AGENCY CASE, ALSO A JUDGE KOH DECISION. SO
10:38AM 5 THERE'S A LONG SERIES OF CASES THAT HAVE HELD THIS.

10:38AM 6 AND WHAT THAT REFLECTS IS THAT I THINK YOU HAVE TO LOOK IN
10:38AM 7 A CASE LIKE THIS, AS THOSE COURTS DID, AT THE NATURE OF THE
10:38AM 8 ACTIVITY THAT IS GIVING RISE TO THE CLAIM.

10:38AM 9 HERE PRIMARILY WHAT THE PLAINTIFFS ARE ALLEGING IS A
10:38AM 10 CHALLENGE TO TWO THINGS:

10:38AM 11 ONE IS THE DECISIONS THAT YOUTUBE MADE WITH RESPECT TO
10:38AM 12 RESTRICTED MODE, AND THAT'S THE EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN VIDEOS
10:38AM 13 FROM BEING ELIGIBLE TO BEING SHOWN IN YOUTUBE'S RESTRICTED
10:38AM 14 MODE;

10:39AM 15 AND THE SECOND IS THE DECISION TO DEMONETIZE SOME VIDEOS,
10:39AM 16 ALTHOUGH NOT ALL OF THE VIDEOS.

10:39AM 17 SO MS. WHITE CAN CERTAINLY ADDRESS WHETHER THOSE
10:39AM 18 ALLEGATIONS EVEN STATE A CLAIM UNDER THE UNRAH ACT, BUT
10:39AM 19 ASSUMING THAT THEY DID, THAT CHALLENGE, THE SPECIFIC ISSUES AT
10:39AM 20 ISSUE HERE, PLAINLY QUALIFY AS PUBLISHING ACTIVITY AS IT'S BEEN
10:39AM 21 DEFINED BY THE NINTH CIRCUIT AND THE SERIES OF NORTHERN
10:39AM 22 DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA AND OTHER CASES THAT I MENTIONED.

10:39AM 23 SO WITH RESPECT TO RESTRICTED MODE, THAT WAS THE EXPRESS
10:39AM 24 HOLDING OF THE PRAGER II STATE COURT DECISION CHALLENGED THE
10:39AM 25 RESTRICTED MODE CLEARLY COMES UNDER SECTION 230(C) (2) AS

10:39AM 1 PUBLISHING CONDUCT, EXCUSE ME, AND LIKEWISE THE SAME THING WITH
10:39AM 2 RESPECT TO DEMONETIZATION, AND THAT WAS CONFIRMED EVEN MORE
10:39AM 3 RECENTLY BY JUDGE KIM'S DECISION IN THE LEWIS CASE WHICH WE
10:39AM 4 SUBMITTED AS SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITY. AND THAT WAS A CASE
10:40AM 5 INVOLVING DEMONETIZATION, AND THE COURT THERE EXPLAINED VERY
10:40AM 6 CLEARLY I THINK THAT DEMONETIZATION IS A FORM OF PUBLISHER
10:40AM 7 ACTIVITY.

10:40AM 8 THE COURT: LET ME PAUSE YOU RIGHT THERE,
10:40AM 9 MR. WILLEN, BECAUSE I GET THE POINT THAT OTHER CASES HAVE HELD
10:40AM 10 THAT PUBLISHING ACTIVITY ENCOMPASSES QUITE A BROAD SWATH OF
10:40AM 11 ACTIVITY, I UNDERSTAND THAT POINT.

10:40AM 12 BUT TO PUT A REALLY FINE POINT ON IT HERE, WHAT I'M
10:40AM 13 CONCERNED ABOUT IS IF, IF THE ALLEGATION IS, AND I KNOW THAT
10:40AM 14 GOOGLE DISPUTES THAT THIS IS REALLY WHAT IS ALLEGED, BUT IF THE
10:40AM 15 ALLEGATION IS THAT, A, SOMEONE WHO DOES ALL OF THOSE PUBLISHING
10:40AM 16 ACTIVITIES IS NEVERTHELESS DISCRIMINATING ON THE BASIS OF THE
10:40AM 17 AUTHOR'S IDENTITY, THE CONTENT CREATOR'S IDENTITY, REGARDLESS
10:40AM 18 OF WHAT IT IS THAT THE CONTENT HAS IN IT, IF THAT'S THE
10:40AM 19 ALLEGATION, ARE YOU SAYING THAT THAT IS PUBLISHING ACTIVITY,
10:40AM 20 DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF, LET'S JUST SAY SEXUAL
10:41AM 21 ORIENTATION OF THE CONTENT CREATOR, THAT'S WITHIN PUBLISHING
10:41AM 22 ACTIVITY UNDER (C) (1)?

10:41AM 23 MR. WILLEN: WELL, I WOULD SAY TWO THINGS. SO,
10:41AM 24 FIRST OF ALL, I THINK IT'S ACTUALLY CLEAR FROM THE FACTS
10:41AM 25 ALLEGED IN THE COMPLAINT AS OPPOSED TO KIND OF RHETORIC IN THE

10:41AM 1 COMPLAINT THAT THAT'S NOT WHAT IS PLAUSIBLY ALLEGED HERE.

10:41AM 2 YOU KNOW, WE KNOW, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT ALL OF THE -- NONE OF
10:41AM 3 THE PLAINTIFFS HERE HAVE HAD ALL OF THEIR VIDEOS EXCLUDED FROM
10:41AM 4 RESTRICTED MODE, NONE OF THEM HAVE ALL OF THEIR VIDEOS NOT
10:41AM 5 ELIGIBLE FOR MONETIZATION.

10:41AM 6 SO CLEARLY IF YOU ACTUALLY LOOK AT WHAT IS GOING ON IN
10:41AM 7 THIS CASE, IT'S VERY HARD TO SAY THAT THERE IS ANY SORT OF
10:41AM 8 IDENTITY OR USER BASE DISCRIMINATION. SO I THINK THAT'S AN
10:41AM 9 IMPORTANT POINT.

10:41AM 10 BUT AGAIN, WITH RESPECT TO SORT OF THE LEGAL QUESTION
10:41AM 11 UNDER SECTION 230, I MEAN I THINK IT DOES FOLLOW, AND THERE MAY
10:41AM 12 BE SOME CASES WHERE THIS COULD NOT BE THE CASE DEPENDING ON THE
10:41AM 13 PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

10:41AM 14 BUT THE NINTH CIRCUIT HAS BEEN VERY CLEAR THAT SECTION
10:42AM 15 230(C) (1) APPLIES WITHOUT REGARD TO THE NATURE OF THE CAUSE OF
10:42AM 16 ACTION.

10:42AM 17 THE THING THAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT IS WHAT IS THE DUTY THAT
10:42AM 18 THE CAUSE OF ACTION IMPOSES AND WHERE THAT DUTY TAKES THE FORM
10:42AM 19 OF A COMMAND EITHER TO PUBLISH OR NOT TO PUBLISH. THAT IS
10:42AM 20 PRECISELY WHAT SECTION 230(C) (1) PROTECTS AGAINST. SO
10:42AM 21 WITHDRAWING CONTENT FROM PUBLICATION, CLEAR PUBLIC ACTIVITY.

10:42AM 22 SO WHERE A DISCRIMINATION CLAIM TAKES THE FORM OF SEEKING
10:42AM 23 TO IMPOSE A DUTY ON THE PLATFORM TO EITHER PUBLISH OR NOT TO
10:42AM 24 WITHDRAW FROM PUBLICATION A PARTICULAR PIECE OF CONTENT OR A
10:42AM 25 PARTICULAR USER'S CONTENT, THAT I THINK JUST UNDER THE

10:42AM 1 ESTABLISHED LAW APPLIES AND KICKS THE IMMUNITY IN.

10:42AM 2 THE COURT: THAT'S WHY I WAS ASKING THIS QUESTION IN
10:42AM 3 THE CONTEXT OF THE UNRAH ACT BECAUSE THAT TO ME SEEMED LIKE THE
10:42AM 4 ONLY -- IT'S NOT -- IT CAN'T BE A FIRST AMENDMENT ISSUE. WE
10:43AM 5 KNOW THAT FROM PRAGER.

10:43AM 6 MR. WILLEN: YEAH.

10:43AM 7 THE COURT: I DIDN'T REALLY SEE HOW . THERE'S A 14TH
10:43AM 8 AMENDMENT ISSUE. IT'S NOT REALLY PLED THAT WAY.

10:43AM 9 IT'S MORE OF AS A RESPONSE TO THE AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE
10:43AM 10 UNDER 230 (C) . SO THAT'S WHY I WAS FOCUSING ON THE UNRAH ACT
10:43AM 11 BECAUSE IMAGINE THAT A PUBLISHER WAS DISCRIMINATING AGAINST A
10:43AM 12 CONTENT CREATOR BASED ON RACE, AND JUST MAKE IT REAL
10:43AM 13 STRAIGHTFORWARD, AND THAT WAS THE ALLEGATION.

10:43AM 14 SO LET'S JUST REMOVE IT FROM THE ACTUAL CASE HERE, BECAUSE
10:43AM 15 I KNOW THAT GOOGLE HAS A DIFFERENT VIEW OF WHAT ACTUALLY IS
10:43AM 16 PLED AND WHAT WAS PLAUSIBLY PLED, AND I JUST WANTED TO AVOID
10:43AM 17 THAT ISSUE.

10:43AM 18 I'M ASKING YOU A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION. A PUBLISHER IS
10:43AM 19 DISCRIMINATING AGAINST A CONTENT CREATOR ON THE BASIS OF RACE,
10:43AM 20 NOT ON CONTENT, IS THAT PUBLISHING ACTIVITY UNDER (C) (1) AND IS
10:43AM 21 IT IMMUNIZED -- WOULD IT ALSO BE IMMUNIZED UNDER (C) (2)?

10:43AM 22 MR. WILLEN: YEAH. SO I THINK THE (C) (2) QUESTION
10:43AM 23 IS A DIFFICULT ONE BECAUSE OF THE GOOD FAITH LANGUAGE.

10:44AM 24 OBVIOUSLY WE HAVE NOT SPECIFICALLY RAISED (C) (2) IN
10:44AM 25 CONNECTION WITH THIS MOTION. I THINK THIS ISSUE HAS NOT

10:44AM 1 SPECIFICALLY COME UP IN THE (C) (2) CONTEXT. I CAN IMAGINE SOME
10:44AM 2 COURTS TAKING THE POSITION THAT A PROPERLY PLEADED CLAIM OF THE
10:44AM 3 SORT THAT YOU DESCRIBE AS SORT OF FACIAL RACE DISCRIMINATION
10:44AM 4 CLAIM MAY NOT BE GOOD FAITH UNDER (C) (2), I CAN IMAGINE A COURT
10:44AM 5 TAKING THAT POSITION.

10:44AM 6 I THINK AGAIN, THOUGH, (C) (1) DOES NOT HAVE A GOOD FAITH
10:44AM 7 PROVISION, AND IT APPLIES WITH CIRCUMSTANCES AND APPLIES
10:44AM 8 DIFFERENTLY.

10:44AM 9 I THINK WE HAVE TO LOOK AT THE CARVE-OUTS THAT DO EXIST
10:44AM 10 UNDER (C) (1). WE HAVE PARTICULAR STATUTES THAT CONGRESS CHOSE
10:44AM 11 TO EXEMPT, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, FEDERAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
10:44AM 12 CLAIMS, CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS, CLAIMS UNDER THE STORED
10:44AM 13 COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS PRIVACY ACT.
10:45AM 14 DISCRIMINATION CLAIMS OBVIOUSLY ARE NOT, NOT THERE.

10:45AM 15 I THINK THERE COULD BE SOME STARK CASES WHERE A COURT
10:45AM 16 MIGHT FIND UNDER A PARTICULAR SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SOME
10:45AM 17 ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION DIDN'T TAKE THE FORM OF A PUBLISHER OF
10:45AM 18 ACTUALLY TARGETING PUBLISHER CONDUCT, AND, THEREFORE, DIDN'T
10:45AM 19 COME WITHIN (C) (1).

10:45AM 20 I THINK THIS CASE, WHICH IS THE CASE THAT WE HAVE TO LOOK
10:45AM 21 AT, IS I THINK CLEARLY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW GIVEN THE
10:45AM 22 NATURE OF THE ALLEGATIONS FOCUSSED SPECIFICALLY ON RESTRICTED
10:45AM 23 MODE, FOCUSSED ON DEMONETIZATION.

10:45AM 24 WE KNOW FROM THE CASES THAT THOSE ARE CORE PUBLISHER
10:45AM 25 ACTIVITIES, AND WE KNOW FROM THE CASES THAT THE DISCRIMINATION

10:45AM 1 CLAIMS THAT ARE TARGETING THOSE KINDS OF ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN
10:45AM 2 REPEATEDLY PRECLUDED BY SECTION 230 (C) (1) .

10:45AM 3 SO I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY BASIS IN THIS CASE, GIVEN
10:45AM 4 THESE ALLEGATIONS, TO DEPART FROM THAT CONSENSUS.

10:45AM 5 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. LET ME JUST ASK, DOES ANYONE
10:46AM 6 ON BEHALF OF GOOGLE WISH TO ADDRESS THE REQUEST FOR UNUSUAL
10:46AM 7 NOTICE?

10:46AM 8 MR. WILLEN: SURE. I'D BE HAPPY TO TALK ABOUT THAT
10:46AM 9 AS WELL. YEAH, I THINK WE SHARE YOUR SENSE, YOUR HONOR, THAT
10:46AM 10 THE EXECUTIVE ORDER REALLY HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ISSUES ON
10:46AM 11 THIS MOTION.

10:46AM 12 THE EXECUTIVE ORDER SEEMS TO US, AT LEAST THE ONLY
10:46AM 13 PROVISION OF IT THAT PURPORTS TO HAVE ANY ACTUAL PRESENT
10:46AM 14 EFFECT, WHICH IS PARAGRAPH 2, IS ADDRESSED TO AN INTERPRETATION
10:46AM 15 OF SECTION 230 (C) (2) (A) , WHICH SEEMS TO REDUCE TO IF YOU DON'T
10:46AM 16 QUALIFY FOR PROTECTION UNDER 230 (C) (2) (A) , YOU'RE NOT PROTECTED
10:46AM 17 BY SECTION 230 (C) (2) (A) .

10:46AM 18 SO I DON'T THINK THAT HAS ANY BEARING ON THIS MOTION WHICH
10:46AM 19 DOESN'T RELY ON SECTION 230 (C) (2) AT ALL.

10:46AM 20 EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE ORDER IS SORT OF DIRECTED TO THINGS
10:46AM 21 THAT MIGHT HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE AND DIRECTIVES FOR RULE MAKING,
10:47AM 22 ET CETERA.

10:47AM 23 SO I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT. I DON'T
10:47AM 24 THINK IT HAS ANY BEARING ON THESE ISSUES, AND CERTAINLY IT
10:47AM 25 DOESN'T DISPLACE AND IT'S REALLY NOT CAPABLE OF DISPLACING

10:47AM 1 EITHER THE TEXT OF THE STATUTE OR THE LAW THAT HAS BEEN
10:47AM 2 ESTABLISHED WITH RESPECT TO (C) (1) .

10:47AM 3 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU FOR THAT.

10:47AM 4 IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ARGUE IN
10:47AM 5 SUPPORT OF YOUR MOTION THAT I HAVEN'T FOCUSSED ON IN PARTICULAR
10:47AM 6 OR THAT YOU THINK NEEDS FURTHER ELABORATION AT THIS TIME?

10:47AM 7 MR. WILLEN: I THINK THE ONLY THING, AND OBVIOUSLY I
10:47AM 8 WANT TO HEAR FROM THE PLAINTIFFS AND RESPOND TO WHAT THEY MIGHT
10:47AM 9 SAY, BUT I DO THINK THAT THE QUESTION OF THE CONSTITUTION, THE
10:47AM 10 CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE TO SECTION 230 THAT THEY HAVE RAISED I
10:47AM 11 THINK, AS THE COURT RECOGNIZED, THE FINDING OF NO STATE ACTION
10:47AM 12 IN THE PRAGER CASE MAKING CLEAR THAT YOUTUBE IS A PRIVATE FORUM
10:48AM 13 AND NOT A GOVERNMENT ACTOR, I THINK THAT FINDING EQUALLY BARS
10:48AM 14 NOT JUST THE FIRST AMENDMENT CLAIM BUT ALSO ANY CHALLENGE TO
10:48AM 15 CONSTITUTIONALITY OF SECTION 230.

10:48AM 16 I THINK THE DECISION THAT IS PROBABLY MOST DIRECTLY ON
10:48AM 17 POINT IN EXPLAINING WHY THAT CHALLENGE FAILS IS THE
10:48AM 18 NINTH CIRCUIT'S DECISION IN ROBERTS VERSUS AT&T MOBILITY WHICH
10:48AM 19 WAS NOT A CASE THAT WE WERE ABLE TO CITE IN OUR PAPERS BECAUSE
10:48AM 20 IT RELATES TO AN ARGUMENT THAT THE PLAINTIFFS MADE IN THEIR
10:48AM 21 SURREPLY AND IN THEIR RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT, BUT I THINK
10:48AM 22 THAT CASE WAS VERY HELPFUL.

10:48AM 23 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU. THANK YOU VERY
10:48AM 24 MUCH.

10:48AM 25 MR. OBSTLER, I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO HAVE IN MIND THE

10:48AM 1 QUESTIONS THAT THE COURT ASKED AT THE BEGINNING, SO JUST TO
10:48AM 2 REVIEW THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRAGER DECISION ON YOUR FEDERAL
10:48AM 3 CLAIMS AND POSSIBLY THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION CLAIM AS WELL;
10:48AM 4 THE QUESTIONS THAT THE COURT HAD ABOUT THE APPLICATION OF
10:49AM 5 230(C) (1) AND (2) AND THE CONTEXT OF THE INTENTIONAL
10:49AM 6 DISCRIMINATION, AND I FRAMED IT AS A QUESTION UNDER THE
10:49AM 7 UNRAH ACT, BUT YOU MAY THINK OF IT DIFFERENTLY, AND THEN I'LL
10:49AM 8 ALSO GIVE YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO -- I WOULD LIKE YOU TO ADDRESS
10:49AM 9 YOUR REQUEST FOR JUDICIAL NOTICE AND LET ME KNOW WHY YOU THINK
10:49AM 10 IT MATTERS TO THE MOTION TO DISMISS. AND MAYBE IT'S JUST
10:49AM 11 SPECIFICALLY TO THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THE MOTION TO
10:49AM 12 INTERVENE, BUT I'D LIKE TO JUST UNDERSTAND THAT, AND ANYTHING
10:49AM 13 ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ARGUE. ALL RIGHT.

10:49AM 14 MR. OBSTLER: THANK YOU SO MUCH, YOUR HONOR.

10:49AM 15 I REALLY APPRECIATE AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET A HEARING ON
10:49AM 16 THIS CASE BECAUSE I THINK THERE ARE A LOT OF MISCONCEPTIONS
10:49AM 17 ABOUT WHAT WE HAVE ALLEGED IN 126 PAGES AND 354 PARAGRAPHS.

10:49AM 18 I'M GOING TO ANSWER ALL OF YOUR QUESTIONS, BUT I'M GOING
10:49AM 19 TO REFER VERY CLOSELY TO THE COMPLAINT IN DOING THAT BECAUSE I
10:49AM 20 THINK A LOT OF WHAT THEY'RE REALLY ARGUING WHEN YOU PEEL BACK
10:50AM 21 THE ONION IS FACT BASED. IF THEY'RE DISCRIMINATING, THESE
10:50AM 22 ARGUMENTS FALL APART.

10:50AM 23 I'LL START WITH THE PRAGER CASE. I THINK WAY TOO MUCH
10:50AM 24 TIME -- AND I BEAR A LOT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS BECAUSE I
10:50AM 25 LITIGATED THE PRAGER CASE -- IS BEING SPENT ON STATE ACTION.

10:50AM 1 I'M GOING TO SUBMIT HERE ON STATE ACTION. I DON'T WANT TO
10:50AM 2 WASTE ANY MORE TIME ON IT. I THINK YOUR HONOR HAS HER VIEWS.

10:50AM 3 MY ONLY ISSUE WITH THE STATE ACTION DECISIONS THAT HAVE
10:50AM 4 COME DOWN SO FAR IS THAT THERE IS NOT A CLEAR PLEADING STANDARD
10:50AM 5 ON WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE TO PLEAD TO PLEAD PUBLIC FUNCTION OR TO
10:50AM 6 PLEAD ENDORSEMENT.

10:50AM 7 SO IF I COULD KNOW THAT, I COULD THEN MAKE A GOOD FAITH
10:50AM 8 DECISION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT I CAN ALLEGE THOSE TYPES OF
10:50AM 9 FACTS. I WOULD LIKE TO HOLD, THOUGH, UNLESS THE COURT REALLY
10:50AM 10 WANTS TO HEAR FROM ME NOW ON THAT ISSUE, I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO
10:50AM 11 HOLD THAT TO THE END BECAUSE, FRANKLY, I'M PRETTY MUCH PREPARED
10:50AM 12 TO SUBMIT ON THAT. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GO UP ON THIS, AND
10:50AM 13 IT MAY BE THAT PRAGER AND HALLECK ENDS EVERYTHING. I
10:50AM 14 UNDERSTAND THAT. OKAY. I DON'T THINK THAT'S THE KEY ISSUE IN
10:50AM 15 MY CASE AT THIS POINT.

10:50AM 16 THE COURT: THE STATE ACTION ISSUE MAKES YOUR FIRST
10:51AM 17 AMENDMENT CLAIM YOUR WEAKEST CLAIM.

10:51AM 18 MR. OBSTLER: I WOULD ABSOLUTELY AGREE WITH THAT,
10:51AM 19 YOUR HONOR. I THINK SKINNER AND THE CONSTITUTIONALITY -- AND
10:51AM 20 SO SKINNER IS SORT OF UPSIDE-DOWN ON THE CONSTITUTIONALITY
10:51AM 21 ARGUMENT, BUT I WOULD AGREE THAT THAT, OF ALL OF THE CLAIMS IN
10:51AM 22 THIS CASE AT THIS POINT, DEPENDING ON WHAT THE STANDARD IS, IF
10:51AM 23 THAT'S THE WEAKEST CLAIM IN THIS CASE.

10:51AM 24 NOW, I WILL SAY THEY HAVE MERGED THEIR TERMS OF SERVICE
10:51AM 25 RECENTLY SO A VIOLATION ON YOUTUBE CAN ALSO LEAD TO THEM TAKING

10:51AM 1 ANDROID DEVICES AWAY, CAN LEAD TO THEM SHUTTING DOWN ALL SORTS
10:51AM 2 OF GOOGLE SERVICES. THEY'RE VERY INVOLVED IN ELECTIONS. WE
10:51AM 3 KNOW THAT FOR WHAT WENT ON IN THE DISASTER THAT HAPPENED IN THE
10:51AM 4 CAUCUSES.

10:51AM 5 THE COURT: I WOULD RATHER NOT GET INTO THINGS THAT
10:51AM 6 ARE NOT ALLEGED IN YOUR COMPLAINT.

10:51AM 7 MR. OBSTLER: YOUR HONOR, WE HAVE ALLEGED THAT THEY
10:51AM 8 ARE INVOLVED IN THESE FUNCTIONS. WE HAVE ALLEGED THAT. IF I
10:51AM 9 NEED TO ALLEGE MORE SPECIFICITY BECAUSE I'VE GOT SOME VERY
10:51AM 10 STRINGENT PLEADING REQUIREMENTS HERE, WE CAN TAKE A LOOK AT
10:52AM 11 THAT.

10:52AM 12 SO MY ONLY REQUEST ON THAT IS THAT THE COURT ARTICULATE
10:52AM 13 THE STANDARD WHY WE FAIL AND GIVE US LEAVE TO CONSIDER WHETHER
10:52AM 14 WE CAN AMEND, BUT OTHERWISE WE'RE PREPARED TO GO UP ON THAT
10:52AM 15 ISSUE, YOUR HONOR.

10:52AM 16 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. LET'S HEAR ABOUT YOUR
10:52AM 17 ARGUMENTS THAT DON'T RELY ON STATE ACTION.

10:52AM 18 MR. OBSTLER: OKAY. LET'S START WITH LANHAM. THEY
10:52AM 19 SEEM TO BE FOCUSED VERY MUCH ON THE STATEMENTS ABOUT FREEDOM
10:52AM 20 OF EXPRESSION AND ALL THIS TYPE OF STUFF. THAT'S NOT THE BASIS
10:52AM 21 FOR A LANHAM CLAIM.

10:52AM 22 THE BASIS FOR A LANHAM CLAIM IS THEY WEAR TWO HATS.
10:52AM 23 THEY'RE ONE OF THE LARGEST CONTENT CREATORS ON THE YOUTUBE
10:52AM 24 PLATFORM. THEY HAVE PREFERRED CONTENT DEALS WITH MAJOR, MAJOR
10:52AM 25 MAINSTREAM PUBLISHERS. SO THEY'RE WEARING TWO HATS.

10:52AM 1 AND WHAT THEY'RE DOING, YOUR HONOR, AND I HOPE YOU CAN SEE
10:52AM 2 THIS, THIS IS WHAT APPEARS --

10:52AM 3 THE COURT: THAT'S OKAY. I HAVE THE COMPLAINT. YOU
10:52AM 4 DON'T NEED TO PUT IT ON THE VIDEO.

10:52AM 5 MR. OBSTLER: YEAH. THEY ARE SAYING TO ALL SORTS OF
10:52AM 6 VIEWERS AND AUDIENCES AROUND THE COUNTRY THAT MY CLIENT'S
10:52AM 7 VIDEOS ARE INAPPROPRIATE BECAUSE THEY CONTAIN SHOCKING CONTENT,
10:53AM 8 SEXUAL OR NUDITY, DRUGS, VIOLENCE, ET CETERA. THAT'S WHAT THEY
10:53AM 9 ARE TELLING THE AUDIENCES WHEN THEY RESTRICT THOSE VIDEOS.

10:53AM 10 THIS CASE, BY THE WAY, IS NOT JUST ABOUT RESTRICTED MODE.
10:53AM 11 IT'S ABOUT EVERY SINGLE SERVICE THAT GOOGLE AND YOUTUBE OFFER
10:53AM 12 WHERE THE TRIGGER TO OBTAIN THE SERVICE IS BASED ON A CONTENT
10:53AM 13 BASED REVIEW OR CONTENT BASED PROCEDURE.

10:53AM 14 SO MY ARGUMENT IN LANHAM IS THAT THEY'RE USING THEIR ROLE
10:53AM 15 AS CONTENT REGULATORS TO BRAND OUR CONTENT AS INAPPROPRIATE, SO
10:53AM 16 WHEN THE READER LOOKS TO SEE WHAT IS ON RESTRICTED MODE, THEY
10:53AM 17 HAVE A LIST AND THAT IS AN AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT THAT THEY HAVE
10:53AM 18 REVIEWED THE CONTENT AND THAT THEY HAVE FOUND THE CONTENT TO
10:53AM 19 VIOLATE THAT RULE.

10:53AM 20 THE COURT: SO LET ME PAUSE YOU THERE FOR A MOMENT
10:53AM 21 AND LET ME MAKE SURE THAT I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING THE
10:53AM 22 LANHAM ACT CLAIM IS.

10:53AM 23 IS IT A FALSE ADVERTISING CLAIM UNDER 1125(A)(1)(B)?

10:54AM 24 MR. OBSTLER: YES, YES.

10:54AM 25 THE COURT: OKAY. SO THEN YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH

10:54AM 1 THE ELEMENTS.

10:54AM 2 SO IF YOU HAD TO TELL ME AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION, WHAT
10:54AM 3 IS THE FALSE OR MISLEADING STATEMENT?

10:54AM 4 MR. OBSTLER: THE FALSE OR MISLEADING STATEMENT THAT
10:54AM 5 THEY'RE MAKING IS THAT MY CLIENT'S VIDEOS ARE INAPPROPRIATE
10:54AM 6 SEXUALLY, CONTAIN SEXUAL NUDITY OR MATERIAL, CONTAIN VIOLENCE,
10:54AM 7 WHEN, IN FACT, THAT IS NOT TRUE BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT EVEN
10:54AM 8 LOOKING AT THE CONTENT.

10:54AM 9 THE COURT: AND YOU'RE SAYING THAT THE STATEMENT IS
10:54AM 10 IMPLICIT BECAUSE A SCREEN DISPLAY THAT INDICATES TO THE VIEWER
10:54AM 11 THAT THAT IS BLOCKED, OR NOT AVAILABLE IN RESTRICTED MODE,
10:54AM 12 IMPLIES THAT IT MUST MEET ONE OF THOSE CATEGORIES OF CONTENT
10:54AM 13 THAT GOOGLE WILL NOT PERMIT TO BE SHOWN IN THAT MODE.

10:54AM 14 IS THAT THE THEORY?

10:54AM 15 MR. OBSTLER: THAT IS CORRECT, YOUR HONOR.

10:54AM 16 BUT IT GOES A LITTLE DEEPER THAN THAT, OKAY? BECAUSE IT
10:54AM 17 ALSO -- AND THIS OVERLAPS WITH THE (C) (1) (A) ISSUE, AND WE'VE
10:55AM 18 ALLEGED THIS AND THE FROSCHE DECLARATION CONTAINS IT, TOO.

10:55AM 19 THEY'RE NOT ONLY USING DISCRIMINATORY ALGORITHMS TO DO
10:55AM 20 THIS. THEY'RE ACTUALLY EMBEDDING METADATA INTO MY CLIENT'S
10:55AM 21 VIDEOS THAT ALLOW THE ALGORITHM TO DO THE PROFILE.

10:55AM 22 AGAIN, UNTIL WE DO DISCOVERY, THIS IS GOING TO BE A VERY
10:55AM 23 COMPLICATED CASE, AND WE'RE SAYING SHOW US THE CODE AND SHOW US
10:55AM 24 HOW THIS WORKS.

10:55AM 25 BUT WE DID A TEA VIDEO, AS YOUR HONOR KNOWS, WHERE WE

10:55AM 1 ALLEGED AND WHERE WE PUT IN BOTH TAG LINES AND THEN WE PUT IT
10:55AM 2 IN WITHOUT THE TAG LINES AND ALL IT SAYS IS WE LIKE TEA. IT
10:55AM 3 GOT RESTRICTED.

10:55AM 4 AND AS MS. FROSCH WAS TOLD AT THE MEETINGS, HOW COULD THAT
10:55AM 5 HAVE HAPPENED UNLESS SOMEBODY PUT SOME METADATA IN THERE THAT
10:55AM 6 ALLOWED THAT ALGORITHM TO FIND YOU.

10:55AM 7 AND SO WHAT WE'RE SAYING IS THAT BECAUSE THEY'RE SUCH
10:56AM 8 LARGE CONTENT CREATORS, AND THEY'RE USING THEIR ROLE AS CONTENT
10:56AM 9 REGULATORS TO ALSO FALSELY BRAND CONTENT THAT IS ABSOLUTELY
10:56AM 10 APPROPRIATE AS INAPPROPRIATE, AND THAT BLOCKS OUR REACH, AND
10:56AM 11 THAT'S HOW THEY'RE COMPETING WITH US.

10:56AM 12 THE COURT: RIGHT. SO THAT DOESN'T SOUND SO MUCH
10:56AM 13 LIKE FALSE ADVERTISING, AND SO THAT'S WHY I WAS ASKING YOU, IS
10:56AM 14 IT A FALSE ADVERTISING CLAIM OR IS IT SOMETHING ELSE?

10:56AM 15 MR. OBSTLER: WHEN YOU SAY THAT THAT DOESN'T SOUND
10:56AM 16 LIKE FALSE ADVERTISING --

10:56AM 17 THE COURT: YOU'RE SAYING -- SO YOU'RE FALSELY
10:56AM 18 BRANDING -- YOUR THEORY IS THAT GOOGLE AND YOUTUBE ARE FALSELY
10:56AM 19 BRANDING YOUR CLIENT'S CONTENT?

10:56AM 20 MR. OBSTLER: THAT'S CORRECT, BUT THEY'RE DOING IT
10:56AM 21 BY SHOWING EVERY VIEWER WHO GOES THERE (INDICATING).

10:56AM 22 MY WIFE THE OTHER DAY ACTUALLY GOT A RESTRICTED MODE
10:56AM 23 NOTICE ON HER FACEBOOK PAGE. SO THE RESTRICTED MODE IS NOW
10:56AM 24 GOING ACROSS PLATFORM. AND SHE LOOKED IT UP AND SHE SAID WHAT
10:56AM 25 IS GOING ON HERE?

10:56AM 1 THE POINT IS -- I'M SORRY, THE POINT IS --

10:57AM 2 THE COURT: AGAIN, I'M JUST TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW
10:57AM 3 YOUR CLAIM FITS THE CLAIM THAT YOU'VE ALLEGED UNDER THE
10:57AM 4 LANHAM ACT, HOW YOUR FACTS FIT THAT CLAIM. I'M STILL
10:57AM 5 STRUGGLING A LITTLE BIT WITH ALL OF THE ELEMENTS THAT YOU HAVE
10:57AM 6 TO SHOW FOR THE LANHAM ACT.

10:57AM 7 THE QUESTION THAT THE NINTH CIRCUIT FOCUSSED ON WAS THAT
10:57AM 8 THE STATEMENTS, AND THE SAME ARGUMENTS WERE MADE IN THAT CASE
10:57AM 9 AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, THE STATEMENTS WERE NOT MADE IN
10:57AM 10 COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING OR PROMOTION.

10:57AM 11 MR. OBSTLER: YEP.

10:57AM 12 THE COURT: THE FALSE STATEMENTS.

10:57AM 13 RATHER, THE STATEMENTS THAT WERE MADE WERE DESCRIBING
10:57AM 14 TRUTHFULLY WHAT HAD HAPPENED AS IN THIS GOT FLAGGED AS
10:57AM 15 SOMETHING THAT WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM RESTRICTED MODE.

10:57AM 16 SO -- AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT, THE GUIDELINES THAT
10:57AM 17 RESULTED IN THAT DISPLAY BEING AS YOU DESCRIBE WERE NOT
10:58AM 18 ADVERTISING OR PROMOTION.

10:58AM 19 SO IN LIGHT OF PRAGER, HOW DO YOU AVOID THE CONCLUSIONS
10:58AM 20 THAT THAT COURT REACHED? HOW DO YOU AVOID THOSE AND
10:58AM 21 EFFECTIVELY HAVE A CLAIM IN THIS CASE THAT DOESN'T HIT THOSE
10:58AM 22 SAME BARRIERS?

10:58AM 23 MR. OBSTLER: BECAUSE THE COURT IN PRAGER MADE AN
10:58AM 24 INAPPROPRIATE FACTUAL FINDING.

10:58AM 25 THE COURT: OKAY. SO WHAT IS THE INAPPROPRIATE

10:58AM 1 FACTUAL FINDING?

10:58AM 2 MR. OBSTLER: YEAH. IT SAID THERE WAS NO
10:58AM 3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATEMENT THAT IS RESTRICTED IN ANY
10:58AM 4 ADVERTISING OR STATEMENT ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE VIDEO. THAT
10:58AM 5 WAS PLED IN THE COMPLAINT.

10:58AM 6 I ADMIT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CLEARER. WE EXPRESSLY
10:58AM 7 PLED THAT HERE, AND IT IS BY IMPLICATION AS YOU POINTED OUT
10:58AM 8 UNDER THE GRUBBS DECISION OR WHATEVER.

10:58AM 9 I MEAN, THIS IS THE INTERNET AND THEY'RE USING -- THEY'RE
10:58AM 10 RESTRICTING THE VIDEO. THE PERSON LOOKED AT THAT RESTRICTION
10:58AM 11 AND WHAT IS IT -- WHY WOULD THEY RESTRICT THE VIDEO? THERE HAS
10:58AM 12 TO BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH THAT VIDEO AND PEOPLE SEE THAT.

10:59AM 13 AND I THINK THAT IT IS A FACTUAL ISSUE AS TO WHETHER OR
10:59AM 14 NOT THERE IS A CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS STATEMENT OF FACT "MY
10:59AM 15 VIDEO IS RESTRICTED" AND A STATEMENT OF FACT ABOUT WHETHER OR
10:59AM 16 NOT THAT VIDEO CONTAINS INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL, SHOCKING AND
10:59AM 17 SEXUALLY EXPLICIT, OR AS THE FLOOR MANAGER FOR GOOGLE SAID
10:59AM 18 "BECAUSE YOU'RE GAY" AND PUTTING THAT OUT ON THE NETWORK TO
10:59AM 19 EVERYBODY.

10:59AM 20 SECOND OF ALL, IF I WOULD GET LEAVE TO AMEND BECAUSE WE
10:59AM 21 JUST LEARNED THIS, RESTRICTED MODE SWEEPS BROADER THAN WHAT
10:59AM 22 THEY'VE TOLD US AND WHAT THEY'VE REPRESENTED TO THE COURT. WE
10:59AM 23 NOW HAVE EVIDENCE THAT RESTRICTED MODE IS GOING TO PEOPLE WHO
10:59AM 24 DON'T EVEN HAVE IT ON, AND IT'S GOING ACROSS THE PLATFORM.

10:59AM 25 I'M SORRY, I LEARNED THAT RECENTLY. THIS CASE HAS BEEN

10:59AM 1 EVOLVING. WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN A SINGLE LICK OF DISCOVERY ON THIS
10:59AM 2 TO DATE, YOUR HONOR.

10:59AM 3 THE COURT: RIGHT. IT'S NOT UNUSUAL THAT AT THE
10:59AM 4 PLEADING STAGE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE HAD DISCOVERY.

10:59AM 5 MR. OBSTLER: FAIR ENOUGH.

11:00AM 6 THE COURT: THAT'S WHY WE'RE AT THE PLEADING STAGE.

11:00AM 7 MR. OBSTLER: YEAH.

11:00AM 8 THE COURT: SO THE ISSUE I STILL THINK IS
11:00AM 9 CHALLENGING FOR YOU IS CHARACTERIZING THESE STATEMENTS AS
11:00AM 10 ADVERTISING OR PROMOTION. I THINK THAT'S STILL A CHALLENGING
11:00AM 11 POINT.

11:00AM 12 AND EVEN IF YOU HAD DISCOVERY ABOUT HOW RESTRICTED MODE IS
11:00AM 13 BEING APPLIED OR MISAPPLIED IN YOUR VIEW, OR OVERINCLUSIVE OR
11:00AM 14 UNDERINCLUSIVE, HOW IS THAT ADVERTISING OR PROMOTION IF WHAT
11:00AM 15 APPLE -- I'M SORRY, APPLE -- IF WHAT GOOGLE AND YOUTUBE ARE
11:00AM 16 DOING ARE SIMPLY SAYING THIS IS THE RESULT OF WHATEVER IT IS
11:00AM 17 BEHIND THE SCENES THAT RESULTED IN AN EXCLUSION FROM RESTRICTED
11:00AM 18 MODE, WHETHER IT'S A HUMAN DOING IT OR AN ALGORITHM DOING IT OR
11:00AM 19 A COMMUNITY FLAG, OR WHATEVER THE MECHANISM IS, THEY'RE
11:00AM 20 REPORTING ON THAT BLACK SCREEN THAT THAT PARTICULAR CONTENT IS
11:00AM 21 SUBJECT TO RESTRICTED MODE.

11:00AM 22 THAT'S A FACTUAL STATEMENT.

11:01AM 23 MR. OBSTLER: CORRECT, YOUR HONOR.

11:01AM 24 THE COURT: AND SO -- YOU KNOW, IT'S A LITTLE BIT --
11:01AM 25 WE CAN GET TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER, YOU KNOW, WHAT THE

11:01AM 1 INTERSECT IS WITH SECTION 230, BUT JUST FOCUSING ON JUST THE
11:01AM 2 LANHAM ACT CLAIM ITSELF AND WHETHER YOU MEET THE ELEMENTS, I'M
11:01AM 3 STILL HAVING TROUBLE WITH THE ALLEGATION THAT THAT IS REALLY
11:01AM 4 COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING OR PROMOTION.

11:01AM 5 MR. OBSTLER: BUT THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT THE COURT
11:01AM 6 STRUGGLED WITH IN GRUBBS. THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT THE COURT
11:01AM 7 STRUGGLED WITH IN THE DECISIONS THAT ARE CITED IN PRAGER AND
11:01AM 8 EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM WAS DONE ON A FACTUAL RECORD. THERE
11:01AM 9 ISN'T A MOTION TO DISMISS IN ANY OF THOSE CASES.

11:01AM 10 NOW, I HAD TO MAKE A STRATEGIC DECISION OBVIOUSLY, AS TO
11:01AM 11 WHETHER WE WERE GOING TO MOVE FOR RECONSIDERATION WITH THE
11:01AM 12 NINTH CIRCUIT IN PRAGER. WE CHOSE NOT TO DO SO. THAT'S NOT
11:01AM 13 THIS CASE. IT SHOULDN'T BE HERE, BUT YOU WERE ASKING ABOUT THE
11:01AM 14 CONSEQUENCES OF PRAGER.

11:01AM 15 FOR PRAGER PURPOSES WE CAN HAVE A LEGITIMATE DISPUTE, BUT
11:01AM 16 I THINK HERE WE ARE EXPRESSING ALLEGING THAT THESE ARE
11:02AM 17 STATEMENTS OF FACT THAT ARE BRANDING OUR VIDEOS AS
11:02AM 18 INAPPROPRIATE AT THE SAME TIME THAT THEY ARE NOT RESTRICTING
11:02AM 19 THEIR VIDEOS AND PUTTING THAT STUFF ON THEIR STUFF AND THAT TO
11:02AM 20 ME IS IMPLICIT FALSE ADVERTISING UNDER GRUBBS AND UNDER THE
11:02AM 21 OTHER CASES.

11:02AM 22 AND IF WE DEVELOP A RECORD, AND IT'S PRETTY CLEAR THAT
11:02AM 23 THIS IS NOT EVEN IN THE BALLPARK, YOUR HONOR, I'LL DISMISS THE
11:02AM 24 CLAIM. BUT I THINK WE SHOULD GET AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOME
11:02AM 25 DISCOVERY ON THAT CLAIM. I THINK THIS IS COMMERCIAL

11:02AM 1 ADVERTISING AS ALLEGED, AND I BELIEVE THAT BASED ON DISCOVERY
11:02AM 2 AND IF YOU LOOK AT THE CASES AND IF YOU LOOK AT WHAT THEY
11:02AM 3 CONSIDERED IN THOSE CASES, THIS IS NOT A ONE SIZE FITS ALL.
11:02AM 4 THIS CASE IS EXTREMELY DIFFERENT AND ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE
11:02AM 5 NATURE OF MY CLIENTS AND WHAT THAT STATEMENT MEANS ON THEIR
11:02AM 6 VIDEOS.

11:02AM 7 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. LET ME JUST ASK BECAUSE
11:02AM 8 THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME AMBIGUITY ABOUT THIS IN THE BRIEFING.

11:02AM 9 DO THE PLAINTIFFS ALSO ALLEGE AN 1125(A) (1) (A) FALSE
11:02AM 10 ASSOCIATION CLAIM OR ARE YOU LIMITING YOUR CLAIM UNDER THE
11:02AM 11 LANHAM ACT TO FALSE ADVERTISING?

11:03AM 12 MR. OBSTLER: AT THIS POINT WE'RE LIMITING UNDER
11:03AM 13 FALSE ADVERTISING.

11:03AM 14 THE COURT: OKAY.

11:03AM 15 MR. OBSTLER: I HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT THE FALSE
11:03AM 16 ASSOCIATION CLAIM TO BE HONEST, YOUR HONOR.

11:03AM 17 THE COURT: OKAY.

11:03AM 18 MR. OBSTLER: THE CONCERN IS, AND IT GOES TO THE
11:03AM 19 THEORY IN THE WHOLE CASE, IS THAT WE THINK THAT THE WEARING OF
11:03AM 20 THE TWO HATS AND THE USE OF THE COMPUTERS, BECAUSE THEY CAN'T
11:03AM 21 HAVE HUMANS DO THIS STUFF, HAS GOTTEN TO THE POINT WHERE IT HAS
11:03AM 22 GOTTEN ANTICOMPETITIVE.

11:03AM 23 I UNDERSTAND THE LIMITS OF A LANHAM ACT CLAIM AS OPPOSED
11:03AM 24 TO AN ANTITRUST OR A UCL CLAIM, AND I RESPECT THAT. I
11:03AM 25 UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE HERE IS COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING. I

11:03AM 1 UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS VERY LEGITIMATE FOR YOUR HONOR TO SAY,
11:03AM 2 BOY, IT'S A FACT -- IT'S SAYING YOU'RE RESTRICTED.

11:03AM 3 BUT THE QUESTION IS, YOUR HONOR, DON'T YOU ASK YOURSELF
11:03AM 4 WHY WHEN YOU SEE THAT? ISN'T IT REASONABLE TO SUGGEST THAT
11:03AM 5 PEOPLE ARE SAYING WHY?

11:03AM 6 AND FURTHERMORE, IF THE VIDEO ISN'T CONTAINING THAT
11:03AM 7 MATERIAL, WHY IS IT BEING RESTRICTED? THAT IN AND OF ITSELF IS
11:04AM 8 A FALSE STATEMENT. IT MAY NOT BE FALSE ADVERTISING.

11:04AM 9 THE COURT: I UNDERSTAND YOUR THESIS FOR THE LANHAM
11:04AM 10 ACT CLAIM.

11:04AM 11 SO LET ME ASK YOU TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION THAT I HAD
11:04AM 12 RAISED AND THAT MR. WILLEN AND I SPENT SOME TIME DISCUSSING,
11:04AM 13 WHICH IS THAT WHETHER THERE IS IMMUNITY UNDER 230(C) (1) AND (2)
11:04AM 14 IN THE CONTEXT OF A CLAIM FOR INTENTIONAL DISCRIMINATION BASED
11:04AM 15 ON IDENTITY.

11:04AM 16 MR. OBSTLER: YES, YOUR HONOR. THIS IS PROBABLY THE
11:04AM 17 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN THIS CASE, ABSOLUTELY THE MOST
11:04AM 18 IMPORTANT ISSUE IN THIS CASE AND ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT
11:04AM 19 ISSUES FOR THE INTERNET.

11:04AM 20 IT'S DIFFICULT FOR ME TO BELIEVE, AND I START WITH THIS
11:04AM 21 PREMISE THAT CONGRESS ENACTED THE LAW IN WHICH IT ALLOWED
11:04AM 22 INTERNET COMPANIES, EVEN IF THEY WANTED, TO SELF-REGULATE TO DO
11:04AM 23 SO BY FILTERING PEOPLE AND NOT CONTENT.

11:04AM 24 THERE IS NOTHING IN THE LANGUAGE OF (C) (1) OR (C) (2) THAT
11:04AM 25 PERMITS THIS TYPE OF BEHAVIOR. NOTHING. IT SAYS MATERIAL, IT

11:05AM 1 DOESN'T SAY PEOPLE.

11:05AM 2 OUR ALLEGATION IN THIS CASE IS THEY'RE FILTERING PEOPLE.
11:05AM 3 THEY'RE NOT FILTERING -- SO GOING TO (C) (1), LET ME MAKE ONE
11:05AM 4 POINT BEFORE WE GET INTO THE STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION OF THE
11:05AM 5 WHOLE THING.

11:05AM 6 ON (C) (1), THE REASON THAT, THAT PRAGER II, JUDGE WALSH
11:05AM 7 DISMISSED THE CLAIM WAS THAT HE SAID THAT THERE WAS NO
11:05AM 8 ALLEGATION THAT GOOGLE ADDED ANYTHING TO THE CONTENT.
11:05AM 9 WE HAVE THAT ALLEGATION IN THIS CASE.

11:05AM 10 THE COURT: I'M SORRY, NO ALLEGATION THAT GOOGLE
11:05AM 11 ADDED ANYTHING --

11:05AM 12 MR. OBSTLER: ANYTHING TO MY CLIENT'S CONTENT. HE'S
11:05AM 13 SAYING UNDER (C) (1), UNDER ROOMMATES, IF YOU'RE INVOLVED IN ANY
11:05AM 14 ASPECT OF WHAT THE CONTENT IS THAT IS BEING CENSORED, RIGHT,
11:05AM 15 THEN YOU DON'T GET IMMUNITY. EVERYBODY AGREES IN ROOMMATES.
11:05AM 16 IN FACT, GOOGLE --

11:05AM 17 THE COURT: ARE YOU REFERRING TO YOUR ALLEGATION
11:05AM 18 THAT GOOGLE OR YOUTUBE IS ADDING METADATA TO YOUR CLIENT'S
11:06AM 19 CONTENT.

11:06AM 20 MR. OBSTLER: YES. YES.

11:06AM 21 THE COURT: AND THAT IS WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS THE
11:06AM 22 ADDITION OF CONTENT AS WITH PUBLISHING OR MAKING DECISIONS
11:06AM 23 ABOUT PUBLISHING?

11:06AM 24 MR. OBSTLER: YES, BECAUSE THE METADATA IS WHAT THE
11:06AM 25 ALGORITHM IS USING TO MAKE THE DECISION.

11:06AM 1 THE COURT: DOES A PUBLISHER NOT GET TO EDIT?

11:06AM 2 MR. OBSTLER: YES, BUT A PUBLISHER WHO HAS A
11:06AM 3 CONTRACT WITH ITS AUTHOR THAT IT'S GOING TO BE VIEWPOINT
11:06AM 4 NEUTRAL DOESN'T GET TO DISCRIMINATE.

11:06AM 5 IN OTHER WORDS, IN OTHER WORDS, CAN THE -- CAN
11:06AM 6 SIMON & SCHUSTER GET YOUR LICENSING RIGHTS BY YOU AGREEING TO A
11:06AM 7 TERM OF SERVICE AND SAYING WE'RE GOING TO GIVE YOU VIEWPOINT
11:06AM 8 NEUTRAL EDITING OF YOUR STUFF AND THEN TURN AROUND AND BREACH
11:06AM 9 THAT?

11:06AM 10 THE COURT: SO THAT'S A DIFFERENT QUESTION. IF
11:06AM 11 YOU'RE SAYING THAT THERE'S A BREACH OF CONTRACT HERE BETWEEN A
11:06AM 12 PUBLISHER AND AN AUTHOR, THAT WOULD BE ONE THING, BUT THAT'S
11:06AM 13 NOT WHAT WE'RE FOCUSING ON RIGHT NOW.

11:06AM 14 WE'RE TALKING ABOUT WHAT IS ENCOMPASSED WITHIN (C) (1) IN
11:07AM 15 TERMS PUBLISHING, AND I RAISED THIS QUESTION VERY DIRECTLY WITH
11:07AM 16 GOOGLE'S LAWYERS, DOES PUBLISHING INCLUDE DISCRIMINATING BASED
11:07AM 17 ON THE AUTHOR'S IDENTITY? WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

11:07AM 18 AND IS THAT AMONG THE FUNCTIONS A PUBLISHER IS ALLOWED TO
11:07AM 19 CONDUCT IN ITS ROLE AS A PUBLISHER AND THAT IS IMMUNIZED UNDER
11:07AM 20 (C) (1)?

11:07AM 21 (C) (2) HAS A GOOD FAITH REQUIREMENT. (C) (1) DOES NOT.
11:07AM 22 YOUR ARGUMENT MAY BE SUBSTANTIALLY STRONGER UNDER (C) (2), BUT
11:07AM 23 UNDER (C) (1), IF THE PUBLISHER CAN CHOOSE WHAT TO PUBLISH AND
11:07AM 24 HOW, IT'S A VERY DIFFICULT ARGUMENT TO MAKE, AND THAT'S WHY I
11:07AM 25 WAS VERY INTERESTED IN THE QUESTION OF -- AND MR. WILLEN MADE

11:07AM 1 THE POINT THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN KINDS OF CAUSES OF ACTION THAT
11:07AM 2 TAKE CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF THE SCOPE OF 230(C)(1), IS THAT -- IF I
11:08AM 3 WERE TO CONSTRUE YOUR CLAIM THIS WAY, AND THERE'S A DEBATE
11:08AM 4 ABOUT WHETHER IT'S APPROPRIATE TO CONSTRUE IT THIS WAY GIVEN
11:08AM 5 THE FACTS THAT ARE ALLEGED IN YOUR COMPLAINT, THAT THERE WAS
11:08AM 6 INTENTIONAL DISCRIMINATION BASED ON IDENTITY AS OPPOSED TO
11:08AM 7 CONTENT, WHAT IS YOUR BEST CASE FOR SAYING THAT 230(C)(1) DOES
11:08AM 8 NOT ENCOMPASS THAT?

11:08AM 9 MR. OBSTLER: THE QUESTION IS DOES 230(C)(1)
11:08AM 10 IMMUNIZE THEM AS TO THE SPECIFIC CAUSES OF ACTION IN THE CASE;
11:08AM 11 RIGHT?

11:08AM 12 THE COURT: YES. YES. SO THE UNRAH ACT IS THE ONLY
11:08AM 13 ONE THAT I THINK GIVES YOU A LEG TO STAND ON.

11:08AM 14 MR. OBSTLER: WHAT ABOUT BREACH OF CONTRACT,
11:08AM 15 YOUR HONOR?

11:08AM 16 THE COURT: I'M SORRY?

11:08AM 17 MR. OBSTLER: WHAT ABOUT BREACH OF CONTRACT?

11:08AM 18 THE COURT: SO YOU DON'T HAVE BREACH OF CONTRACT.
11:08AM 19 YOU HAVE BREACH OF THE IMPLIED COVENANT OF GOOD FAITH AND FAIR
11:08AM 20 DEALING, WHICH THAT'S A HARD ONE IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCE,
11:08AM 21 ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE ALLEGED CONTRACT TERMS THAT YOU CITE
11:08AM 22 SAYING THAT THERE WAS A BREACH OF THE IMPLIED COVENANT IS
11:09AM 23 REALLY DIFFICULT JUST ON A 12(B)(6) BASIS.

11:09AM 24 SO YOU DON'T HAVE A BREACH OF CONTRACT CLAIM.

11:09AM 25 MR. OBSTLER: WELL, YOUR HONOR, WOULD YOU GIVE ME

11:09AM 1 LEAVE TO AMEND AND ADD IT?

11:09AM 2 THE COURT: WELL, BEFORE WE GET TO THAT, I'M JUST
11:09AM 3 REALLY VERY INTERESTED IN THIS QUESTION.

11:09AM 4 MR. OBSTLER: I AM, TOO, YOUR HONOR. LET ME TAKE
11:09AM 5 ANOTHER SHOT AT IT, PLEASE, IF I COULD.

11:09AM 6 THE COURT: SO WHAT IS THE BEST CASE THAT YOU HAVE?

11:09AM 7 MR. OBSTLER: OKAY. NUMBER ONE, THERE IS NO (C) (1)
11:09AM 8 COVERAGE HERE BECAUSE THEY'RE ADDING OUR CONTENT, SO JUST ON
11:09AM 9 THE FACE OF THE STATUTE.

11:09AM 10 NUMBER TWO, CAN CONGRESS ENACT A LAW THAT IMMUNIZES
11:09AM 11 PUBLISHERS FROM RACE DISCRIMINATION IN THE ACT OF PUBLISHING?
11:09AM 12 IS THAT LAW CONSTITUTIONAL?

11:09AM 13 I WOULD SAY THAT UNDER DENVER AREA IT IS NOT. THAT'S MY
11:09AM 14 ARGUMENT.

11:09AM 15 THE COURT: YOUR RESPONSE TO THE COURT'S QUESTION
11:09AM 16 WOULD BE IF (C) (1) DOES ALLOW IT, IT HAS TO BE
11:09AM 17 UNCONSTITUTIONAL?

11:09AM 18 MR. OBSTLER: THAT'S CORRECT.

11:09AM 19 THE COURT: IT DOES IMMUNIZE THAT KIND OF -- LET'S
11:09AM 20 CALL IT INTENTIONAL DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SOME PROTECTED
11:10AM 21 CHARACTERISTIC, THAT KIND OF STATUTE HAS TO BE
11:10AM 22 UNCONSTITUTIONAL?

11:10AM 23 MR. OBSTLER: YES, YOUR HONOR.

11:10AM 24 THE COURT: WHY?

11:10AM 25 MR. OBSTLER: BECAUSE UNDER DENVER AREA THE COURT

11:10AM 1 SAID THAT A CONGRESSIONAL ACT THAT DOES PERMISSIVE SPEECH
11:10AM 2 REGULATION AND THE GRANTING OF IMMUNITY THAT THEY -- I MEAN, I
11:10AM 3 WOULD BE ABLE TO SUE THEM, RIGHT, BUT FOR THE CDA.

11:10AM 4 SO THEY ARE -- WHAT THE COURT SAID IN DENVER AREA, WHICH
11:10AM 5 HAS OFTEN BEEN CITED, AND IT'S WHY WE CAME TO THE GAME LATE IN
11:10AM 6 DENVER, AND I WANT TO APOLOGIZE ON THAT. I HAVE TO ADMIT I
11:10AM 7 WITHDREW EARLY ON THAT ONE.

11:10AM 8 DENVER AREA WAS A FIGHT INITIALLY OVER WHETHER OR NOT,
11:10AM 9 EXACTLY WHAT THE GOVERNMENT AND MR. WILLEN ARE MAKING, WHETHER
11:10AM 10 OR NOT THEY'RE STATE ACTORS AND WHETHER STATE ACTORS -- AND THE
11:10AM 11 CABLE COMPANY SAID THEY'RE NOT STATE ACTORS. HOW CAN THEIR
11:10AM 12 PERMISSION TO BLOCK THINGS THAT ARE INDECENT BE IN ANY WAY BE
11:10AM 13 SUBJECT TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT?

11:11AM 14 AND WHAT JUSTICE BREYER AND SIX JUDGES ON THE SUPREME
11:11AM 15 COURT SAID IS, YES, IT'S BEING DONE FOR A CONGRESSIONAL ACT,
11:11AM 16 BUT FOR THAT ACT YOU AND I ARE NOT HAVING THAT DISCUSSION. WE
11:11AM 17 MAY BE HAVING A DISCUSSION ABOUT WHETHER I STATED A CLAIM, BUT
11:11AM 18 FOR CONGRESSIONAL LAW THAT ALLOWS THEM IMMUNITY ON THESE
11:11AM 19 CLAIMS, WE'RE NOT HAVING THIS DISCUSSION.

11:11AM 20 SO IF THEY'RE GETTING IMMUNITY UNDER THIS STATUTE, IT'S
11:11AM 21 NOT A STATE ACTION ISSUE, IT'S WHETHER THE STATUTE PASSES
11:11AM 22 MUSTER JUST LIKE SECTION 10(C) OF THE CABLE ACT UNDER
11:11AM 23 DENVER AREA.

11:11AM 24 WHAT DID THE COURT SAY? THREE THINGS.
11:11AM 25 GOT TO BE VIEWPOINT NEUTRAL. NOT VIEWPOINT NEUTRAL IN

11:11AM 1 THIS CASE.

11:11AM 2 GOT TO BE NARROWLY TAILORED SO THERE'S NO RISK OF AN
11:11AM 3 IMPROPER VETO.

11:11AM 4 AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT CANNOT INTERFERE WITH PREEXISTING
11:11AM 5 LEGAL RELATIONSHIPS.

11:11AM 6 THIS IS SPOT ON WITH DENVER, AND THIS STATUTE CANNOT
11:11AM 7 WITHSTAND SCRUTINY UNDER DENVER. IT IS A PERMISSIVE SPEECH
11:12AM 8 STATUTE JUST LIKE SECTION 10(C) OF THE CABLE ACT.

11:12AM 9 THE COURT: OKAY. THAT SEEMS LIKE A STRETCH
11:12AM 10 HONESTLY, THAT THAT -- THAT THIS CASE FITS THE MOLD OF
11:12AM 11 PERMISSIVE REGULATION IN DENVER AREA.

11:12AM 12 I'LL LET THE GOOGLE FOLKS RESPOND ON THAT POINT, BUT LET
11:12AM 13 ME JUST MAKE SURE YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER THAT YOU
11:12AM 14 WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SURE THAT THE COURT HEARS IN TERMS OF YOUR
11:12AM 15 ARGUMENT, ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS FURTHER IN SUPPORT
11:12AM 16 OF YOUR OPPOSITION.

11:12AM 17 MR. OBSTLER: WELL, I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT THE
11:12AM 18 EXECUTIVE ORDER.

11:12AM 19 THE COURT: OH, YES.

11:12AM 20 MR. OBSTLER: BUT I WANT TO COME BACK TO THIS POINT,
11:12AM 21 YOUR HONOR, BECAUSE YOU SAY IT SOUNDS LIKE A STRETCH. AND I'D
11:12AM 22 BE CURIOUS IN KNOWING WHY YOUR HONOR BELIEVES THAT BECAUSE I
11:12AM 23 DON'T UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A STATUTE THAT WAS
11:12AM 24 ENACTED TO REGULATE IN INDECENT MATERIAL ON CABLE TELEVISION
11:12AM 25 CHANNELS AND A STATUTE THAT WAS ENACTED OSTENSIBLY TO ALLOW

11:12AM 1 PRIVATE PARTIES TO REGULATE OFFENSIVE MATERIAL ON THE INTERNET.

11:13AM 2 THE COURT: I THINK AT LEAST ONE OF THE KEY
11:13AM 3 DISTINCTIONS HERE IS THAT SECTION 230 (C) PERMITS PRIVATE
11:13AM 4 PARTIES TO DO THEIR OWN SELF-REGULATION. THERE'S NO MANDATE.
11:13AM 5 THERE'S NOTHING -- THERE'S NOTHING THAT IS REQUIRED. THEY MAY
11:13AM 6 OR MAY NOT. AND IF THEY DO, THEY'RE IMMUNIZED.

11:13AM 7 IT PROVIDES PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY. THAT'S WHAT IT IS.
11:13AM 8 IT'S NOT A MANDATE TO REGULATE IN ANY WAY, SHAPE OR FORM.

11:13AM 9 MR. OBSTLER: I AGREE WITH YOU.

11:13AM 10 THE COURT: I THINK IT'S AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION.

11:13AM 11 MR. OBSTLER: THAT'S EXACTLY THE POINT THAT
11:13AM 12 JUSTICE BREYER MADE. HE SAID THIS IS A PERMISSIVE PORTION.
11:13AM 13 THERE WAS A MANDATORY PORTION AND A PERMISSIVE PORTION. 10 (C)
11:13AM 14 WAS THE PERMISSIVE PORTION. IT DOESN'T REQUIRE THEM TO DO IT
11:13AM 15 BUT THEY'RE PERMITTED TO DO IT, AND THE COURT SAID THAT IS
11:13AM 16 UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

11:13AM 17 I COMPLETELY AGREE WITH THE DISTINCTION THAT YOUR HONOR IS
11:13AM 18 MAKING, AND I THINK THAT'S SQUARE WITH DENVER ON THE SECTION
11:14AM 19 10 (C) CLAIM.

11:14AM 20 THE COURT: WELL, I'LL HEAR FROM GOOGLE ON THAT
11:14AM 21 POINT, BUT LET ME GIVE YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE OTHER
11:14AM 22 MATTERS THAT YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO ADDRESS, THE EXECUTIVE
11:14AM 23 ORDER.

11:14AM 24 MR. OBSTLER: THE REASON WE CAME IN WITH THE
11:14AM 25 EXECUTIVE ORDER IS THAT WE JUST WEREN'T CLEAR REALLY ON WHAT

11:14AM 1 THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION REALLY IS.

11:14AM 2 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT.

11:14AM 3 MR. OBSTLER: THEY FILED THIS BRIEF, RIGHT, AND THEY
11:14AM 4 SAY IT CAN APPLY TO THE VIEWPOINT, IT'S CONSTITUTIONAL, IT CAN
11:14AM 5 APPLY TO A VIEWPOINT, IT CAN APPLY TO DISCRIMINATION.

11:14AM 6 AND THEN I READ SECTION 2 OF THE EXECUTIVE ORDER SAYING
11:14AM 7 IT'S THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF
11:14AM 8 JUSTICE IS DIRECTED TO DO EVERYTHING THAT THEY ARE ALLEGING IN
11:14AM 9 THEIR BRIEF.

11:14AM 10 SO I ONLY BRING IT UP TO SAY IF THE ORDER IS ENFORCEABLE
11:14AM 11 AT SOME POINT THEN I DON'T KNOW IF WE HAVE A NEW ISSUE HERE OR
11:14AM 12 WHAT. AND IF THE ORDER IS NOT ENFORCEABLE, THEN THEY'RE
11:14AM 13 ARGUING THAT THE EXECUTIVE ORDER IS JUST SIMPLY NOT
11:14AM 14 ENFORCEABLE. I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE A VIEW ON THAT, AND I DON'T
11:14AM 15 REALLY CARE. AND I AGREE WITH YOUR HONOR, I DON'T THINK IT
11:15AM 16 REALLY MATTERS BECAUSE I THINK AT THE END OF THE DAY I THINK
11:15AM 17 THE STATUTE ON ITS FACE DOESN'T APPLY, AND I THINK THE STATUTE
11:15AM 18 IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

11:15AM 19 BUT THE ONLY REASON I BROUGHT IT UP WAS JUST I COULD NOT
11:15AM 20 SQUARE THAT EXECUTIVE ORDER AND HIM DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF
11:15AM 21 JUSTICE AND SITTING THERE WITH BILL BARR WHEN THEY ANNOUNCED
11:15AM 22 THE ORDER WITH WHAT WAS IN THEIR BRIEF. THAT WAS THE ONLY
11:15AM 23 REASON WE WANTED TO.

11:15AM 24 THE COURT: WELL, LET ME GIVE MR. SUR AN OPPORTUNITY
11:15AM 25 TO ADDRESS THE EXECUTIVE ORDER BUT ALSO ANY OTHER MATTERS

11:15AM 1 RAISED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S MEMORANDUM ON THE CONSTITUTIONALITY
11:15AM 2 QUESTION.

11:15AM 3 MR. SUR.

11:15AM 4 MR. SUR: THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

11:15AM 5 SINCE THE EXECUTIVE ORDER HAS COME UP, I GUESS I WILL
11:15AM 6 START THERE BUT MAYBE JUST TRY TO REITERATE IN OUR BRIEF IN
11:15AM 7 POINT ONE WE SIMPLY ARE RELYING ON ONE OF SEVERAL DOCTRINES OF
11:15AM 8 CONSTITUTIONAL AVOIDANCE, THE DOCTRINE THAT SAYS DECIDE THE
11:15AM 9 STATUTORY QUESTIONS FIRST.

11:15AM 10 MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION TODAY WAS ABOUT THE POTENTIAL
11:16AM 11 NUANCES OF THE STATUTE AND, RECENTLY OR NOT, TAKING A POSITION
11:16AM 12 ON THAT.

11:16AM 13 BUT OF COURSE THE PARTIES ARE WELL VERSED ON THAT AND SO
11:16AM 14 YOUR HONOR HAS BEEN WELL FURNISHED, I THINK, BY THE OPPOSING
11:16AM 15 VIEWS ON THE STATUTORY QUESTION, SIMILARLY WITH THE STATE LAW
11:16AM 16 CLAIMS AS WELL.

11:16AM 17 POINT TWO SIMPLY ARGUES THAT IF THE COURT DOES REACH THE
11:16AM 18 CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION, THAT THERE REALLY IS NO PRECEDENT THAT
11:16AM 19 WOULD SUPPORT HOLDING THE STATUTE TO BE UNCONSTITUTIONAL,
11:16AM 20 PRINCIPALLY FOR THE REASONS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSED ON
11:16AM 21 THAT.

11:16AM 22 BUT JUST THE ONE NOTE I WOULD ADD IS DENVER AREA DID NOT
11:16AM 23 TRANSFORM THE NOTION OF STATE ACTION. JUDGE KOH IN THE OPINION
11:16AM 24 THAT THE COURT OF APPEALS AFFIRMED IN PRAGER UNIVERSITY,
11:16AM 25 ALTHOUGH THE COURT OF APPEALS OPINION DIDN'T ADDRESS

11:16AM 1 DENVER AREA, JUDGE KOH DID REJECT RELIANCE ON IT IN THE
11:16AM 2 UNPUBLISHED OPINION THAT THEN WENT UP TO THE NINTH CIRCUIT AND
11:17AM 3 SO I DO NOTE THAT.

11:17AM 4 AND AS HAS ALREADY BEEN MENTIONED, BUT I WILL REITERATE,
11:17AM 5 THE NINTH CIRCUIT'S OPINION IN ROBERTS VERSUS AT&T MOBILITY,
11:17AM 6 WHICH IS AT 877 F.3D 833, WAS REALLY A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF
11:17AM 7 THE, QUOTE, "SPLINTERED DECISION" IN DENVER AREA, AND REALLY
11:17AM 8 INFORMS ANY ATTEMPT TO APPLY IT CERTAINLY FOR THE COURTS WITHIN
11:17AM 9 THE NINTH CIRCUIT.

11:17AM 10 SO WE THINK THAT VERY HELPFULLY CLARIFIES THAT THE
11:17AM 11 DENVER AREA DOESN'T TRANSFORM THE NOTION OF THE STATE ACTION IN
11:17AM 12 A WAY THAT WOULD REALLY, REALLY CHANGE ANYTHING THAT WE HAVE
11:17AM 13 SAID IN THE BRIEF.

11:17AM 14 HAVING MADE THOSE POINTS, LET ME THEN TURN VERY BRIEFLY TO
11:17AM 15 THE EXECUTIVE ORDER.

11:17AM 16 I THINK IT IS HELPFUL TO CONSIDER THE TEXT OF THE ORDER AS
11:17AM 17 A WHOLE AND IN THAT RESPECT I DO THINK THAT IT IS NOT
11:17AM 18 INSIGNIFICANT THAT THE ORDER HAS A SET OF GENERAL PROVISIONS AT
11:18AM 19 THE END THAT APPLY TO ANY ATTEMPT TO READ THE ORDER ANYWHERE.

11:18AM 20 SO ONE OF THOSE GENERAL PROVISIONS, AND I REALIZE IT
11:18AM 21 BECAUSE THEY APPEAR OFTEN IN GENERAL PROVISIONS, MAYBE THEY
11:18AM 22 DON'T GET THAT MUCH ATTENTION, BUT IT DOES WARRANT SPECIAL
11:18AM 23 ATTENTION IN THE ATTEMPT TO RELY ON HERE.

11:18AM 24 SECTION 8, LETTER C SAYS THAT THE ORDER IS NOT INTENDED TO
11:18AM 25 AND DOES NOT CREATE ANY RIGHT OR BENEFIT, SUBSTANTIVE OR

11:18AM 1 PROCEDURAL, ENFORCEABLE AT LAW OR IN EQUITY BY ANY PARTY
11:18AM 2 AGAINST THE UNITED STATES, ITS DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES OR
11:18AM 3 ENTITIES, ITS OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES OR AGENTS OR ANY OTHER
11:18AM 4 PERSON. SO I THINK WE HAVE TO START THERE.

11:18AM 5 THEN EVEN IF ONE WERE TO ASSUME IN THE ALTERNATIVE THAT
11:18AM 6 SECTION 8 (C) SOMEHOW DIDN'T APPLY, I DO THINK TAKING EACH
11:19AM 7 SECTION IN TURN, THE COURT WILL SEE THAT THESE ARE ABOUT POLICY
11:19AM 8 AND THEY MAY BE EXPRESSED AT LENGTH, BUT THEY ARE ALL POINTS
11:19AM 9 ABOUT POLICY AND ESSENTIALLY DIRECTING VARIOUS EXECUTIVE BRANCH
11:19AM 10 ACTORS TO DO VARIOUS THINGS BUT DON'T GO INTO ANY QUESTION OF
11:19AM 11 CONSTITUTIONALITY.

11:19AM 12 REALLY THE ONLY POINT I WOULD MAKE ABOUT POLICY IS THAT
11:19AM 13 REALLY WHAT IT BRINGS OUR ATTENTION BACK TO IS PAGE 999 OF THE
11:19AM 14 OPINION OF THE COURT OF APPEALS IN PRAGER WHERE BEFORE THEY
11:19AM 15 CONCLUDED THEIR DISCUSSION OF A FIRST AMENDMENT THEY SAID THAT
11:19AM 16 THE PARTIES IN PRAGER UNIVERSITY HAD PROVIDED EXTENSIVE
11:19AM 17 ARGUMENTS ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF THE COURT RULED ONE WAY OR
11:19AM 18 ANOTHER AND WHILE THOSE POLICY CONCEPTS WERE, QUOTE,
11:19AM 19 "IMPORTANT," THE COURT OF APPEALS IN THE NINTH CIRCUIT FOCUSED
11:19AM 20 ON THE FIRST AMENDMENT DOCTRINE.

11:19AM 21 I THINK A SIMILAR CONCLUSION IS APPROPRIATE HERE THAT AT
11:19AM 22 MOST THE EXECUTIVE ORDER INDICATES THAT THERE MAY BE IMPORTANT
11:19AM 23 POLICY ISSUES SOMEWHERE IN THE GENERAL REALM OF SECTION 230,
11:20AM 24 BUT THAT THOSE ARE NOT BEFORE THE COURT IN ASSESSING THE
11:20AM 25 CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE STATUTE.

11:20AM 1 REALLY WITH THAT I WILL CONCLUDE, UNLESS THE COURT HAS ANY
11:20AM 2 FURTHER QUESTION.

11:20AM 3 THE COURT: THANK YOU VERY MUCH, MR. SUR. THAT WAS
11:20AM 4 VERY HELPFUL. I APPRECIATE IT.

11:20AM 5 MR. SUR: THANK YOU.

11:20AM 6 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. SO I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM
11:20AM 7 GOOGLE, YOUTUBE BUT -- WELL, ANYTHING THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO
11:20AM 8 RESPOND TO FROM MY CONVERSATION WITH MR. OBSTLER, BUT I AM
11:20AM 9 INTERESTED IN THE -- IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER TO ADD ON THE
11:20AM 10 DENVER AREA POINT AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

11:20AM 11 MR. WILLEN: SURE. SO WHY DON'T I START WITH THAT
11:20AM 12 AND TALK ABOUT A COUPLE OF THINGS RELATED TO SECTION 230, AND I
11:20AM 13 CAN LET MS. WHITE TALK ABOUT THINGS RELATED TO THE UNRAH ACT
11:20AM 14 AND THE LANHAM ACT.

11:20AM 15 WITH RESPECT TO DENVER AREA, I THINK MR. OBSTLER HAS
11:20AM 16 RIGHTLY POINTED TO THE NINTH CIRCUIT'S DECISION IN ROBERTS
11:20AM 17 WHICH AT LENGTH EXPLAINS THE VERY, VERY LIMITED, IF ANY, IMPORT
11:21AM 18 OF DENVER AREA ON THE QUESTION OF STATE ACTION.

11:21AM 19 SO ROBERTS POINTS OUT, FIRST OF ALL, THAT THERE'S NO
11:21AM 20 MAJORITY OPINION IN THE DENVER AREA CASE. THE OPINION THAT
11:21AM 21 MR. OBSTLER IS RELYING ON IS JUSTICE BREYER'S OPINION FOR FOUR
11:21AM 22 JUSTICES THAT DOES NOT SPEAK FOR THE COURT. JUSTICE KENNEDY
11:21AM 23 AND JUSTICE GINSBERG SUPPLIED TWO ADDITIONAL VOTES BUT ON A
11:21AM 24 VERY, VERY DIFFERENT THEORY.

11:21AM 25 SO JUSTICE BREYER'S OPINION DOESN'T BY ITS OWN TERMS SAY

11:21AM 1 THAT PERMISSIVE SPEECH REGULATION IS SUBJECT TO SOME BRAND NEW
11:21AM 2 FIRST AMENDMENT SCRUTINY. IT CONSTRUES A VERY, VERY SPECIFIC
11:21AM 3 PROVISION OF THE CABLE ACT, AND I THINK THE MOST IMPORTANT
11:21AM 4 POINT ABOUT THAT IS THAT IN ALLOWING THE CABLE COMPANIES TO
11:21AM 5 CENSOR, IT ALLOWED THEM TO CENSOR ONLY A PARTICULAR CONTENT
11:21AM 6 BASED SET OF MATERIALS, WHICH WAS SEXUALLY EXPLICIT CONTENT, SO
11:22AM 7 IT WAS VERY LIMITED IN THAT RESPECT, AND THE STATUTE WAS
11:22AM 8 ENACTED AGAINST A BACKDROP THAT THE CASE INVOLVED PUBLIC ACCESS
11:22AM 9 CHANNELS AND ACCESS CHANNELS ON CABLE NETWORK AND THE VERY
11:22AM 10 SPECIFIC CONTEXT.

11:22AM 11 ONE, THESE CHANNELS WERE HEAVILY REGULATED AND THE COURT
11:22AM 12 AND JUSTICE BREYER'S OPINION NOTED AND RELIED ON.

11:22AM 13 SECONDLY, AND I THINK EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, PRIOR TO THE
11:22AM 14 ENACTMENT OF THE STATUTE IN QUESTION, THE LAW FORBAD THE CABLE
11:22AM 15 COMPANIES FROM ENGAGING IN ANY CONTENT BASED OR ANY REAL
11:22AM 16 EDITORIAL DISCRETION WITH RESPECT TO THESE CHANNELS.

11:22AM 17 SO IT COMPLETELY CHANGED THE BACKGROUND LEGAL PRINCIPLES
11:22AM 18 WITH RESPECT TO THE RIGHT OF THE CABLE COMPANIES TO ENGAGE IN
11:22AM 19 CONTENT RESTRICTION.

11:22AM 20 THAT'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE HAVE HERE. WE
11:22AM 21 HAVE A STATUTE THAT IS NOT CONTENT BASED. SECTION 230(C)(1),
11:22AM 22 AS I THINK THE COURT POINTED OUT, SIMPLY SAYS THAT YOU CANNOT
11:22AM 23 BE TREATED AS A PUBLISHER FOR ANY SPEECH, SO WHETHER YOU ARE
11:23AM 24 RESTRICTING ACCESS TO CONTENT, WHETHER YOU ARE NOT RESTRICTING
11:23AM 25 ACCESS TO CONTENT, AND CERTAINLY NOT WITH RESPECT TO ANY GIVEN

11:23AM 1 CATEGORY OF CONTENT, SECTION 230(C) WILL PROTECT YOU. SO IT'S
11:23AM 2 NOT EVEN CLOSE TO CONTENT BASED AND VIEWPOINT BASED.

11:23AM 3 AND THEN SECONDLY, AND JUST AS IMPORTANTLY, THE BACKGROUND
11:23AM 4 PRIOR TO SECTION 230 WAS THAT ONLINE PLATFORMS, PARTICULARLY
11:23AM 5 PLATFORMS, THE PROGENITORS OF WHAT WE HAVE NOW, GOOGLES AND
11:23AM 6 TWITTERS, HAD FULL DISCRETION, COMPLETE EDITORIAL DISCRETION
11:23AM 7 AND INDEED A FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHT TO MAKE EDITORIAL
11:23AM 8 DETERMINATIONS ABOUT WHAT SPEECH APPEARS ON THEIR PLATFORM.

11:23AM 9 SO SECTION 230 WASN'T CREATING SOME NEW EDITORIAL RIGHT
11:23AM 10 THAT DIDN'T EXIST BEFORE WHEREAS DENVER AREA VERY MUCH WAS. SO
11:23AM 11 THAT'S THE FIRST GENERAL POINT.

11:23AM 12 THE SECOND POINT IS WITH RESPECT TO JUSTICE KENNEDY'S
11:23AM 13 OPINION WHICH SUPPLIED THE SORT OF DECISIVE VOTES FOR THE
11:23AM 14 PROPOSITION THAT AT LEAST THE ONE PROVISION WAS
11:24AM 15 UNCONSTITUTIONAL, THAT WHOLE DECISION WAS BASED ON THE
11:24AM 16 PROPOSITION THAT AT LEAST IN PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNELS WERE A
11:24AM 17 PUBLIC FORUM UNDER THE CONSTITUTION BECAUSE IT WAS SO HEAVILY
11:24AM 18 REGULATED AND WHAT I JUST MENTIONED.

11:24AM 19 JUSTICE BREYER'S OPINION DIDN'T GET INTO THAT, BUT THAT'S
11:24AM 20 REALLY IMPORTANT HERE BECAUSE WE KNOW -- THE THING WE KNOW FROM
11:24AM 21 PRAGER IS THAT YOUTUBE IS NOT A CONSTITUTIONAL PUBLIC FORUM.
11:24AM 22 SO GIVEN THAT, IT'S A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CASE.

11:24AM 23 AND I THINK IT'S QUITE TELLING THAT IN THE HALLECK CASE,
11:24AM 24 OF COURSE THE SUPREME COURT'S MOST RECENT DISCUSSION OF STATE
11:24AM 25 ACTION, THE ONE REFERENCE TO DENVER AREA THAT IS MOST --

11:24AM 1 THE OPERATOR: THE RECORDING HAS STOPPED.

11:24AM 2 MR. WILLEN: EXCUSE ME. CITING DENVER AREA, AND
11:24AM 3 THIS IS A QUOTE FOR THE PROPOSITION THAT THE FREE SPEECH DOES
11:24AM 4 NOT PROHIBIT PRIOR ABRIDGEMENT OF SPEECH.

11:24AM 5 SO THE SUPREME COURT HAS SPOKEN TO THIS. TO THE EXTENT
11:25AM 6 THAT DENVER AREA HAS ANY SIGNIFICANCE, IT'S SIMPLY LIMITED TO
11:25AM 7 ITS UNIQUE FACTS AND DOESN'T APPLY HERE. SO THAT IS
11:25AM 8 DENVER AREA.

11:25AM 9 THE OTHER COUPLE THINGS I WOULD WANT TO SAY IN RESPONSE TO
11:25AM 10 MR. OBSTLER, WE DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT SECTION
11:25AM 11 230(C)(2)(D). WE SPENT MOST OF OUR TIME TALKING ABOUT SECTION
11:25AM 12 230(C)(1).

11:25AM 13 AS WE ARGUED, SECTION 230(C)(2)(B) IS SORT OF A SEPARATE
11:25AM 14 IMMUNITY THAT CLEARLY APPLIES, AS WE KNOW FROM THE
11:25AM 15 PRAGER DECISION, WITH RESPECT TO ANY CLAIM ARISING FROM
11:25AM 16 RESTRICTED MODE. AND I THINK FOR THE REASONS SET OUT IN
11:25AM 17 JUDGE DAVILA'S RECENT OPINION IN ASURVIO VERSUS MALWAREBYTES
11:25AM 18 CASE, THE ALLEGATIONS HERE THAT THERE IS SOME SORT OF
11:25AM 19 COMPETITIVE RELATIONSHIP JUST AREN'T ENOUGH TO GET PLAINTIFFS
11:25AM 20 OUTSIDE OF SECTION 230(C)(2)(B), SO THE COURT HAS ANOTHER PATH
11:25AM 21 AT LEAST WITH RESPECT TO A LOT OF THE CLAIMS HERE.

11:26AM 22 AND THEN I GUESS THE ONLY OTHER POINT I WOULD MAKE IS THAT
11:26AM 23 MR. OBSTLER WAS, TELLINGLY, NOT ABLE TO CITE ANY CASE THAT
11:26AM 24 HELPED HIM ON THE PROPOSITION THAT SECTION 230(C)(1) WOULDN'T
11:26AM 25 APPLY TO A CLAIM UNDER THE UNRAH ACTS UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES

11:26AM 1 THAT WE HAVE HERE, AND THAT'S WHY HE RESORTED TO THE ARGUMENT
11:26AM 2 THAT THE STATUTE WOULD BE UNCONSTITUTIONAL IF APPLIED THAT WAY,
11:26AM 3 AND I DON'T THINK IT WOULD. AND I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY
11:26AM 4 SERIOUS ARGUMENT THAT IT WOULD, BUT HIS INABILITY TO POINT TO
11:26AM 5 ANY CASE LAW THAT HELPS HIM ON THE APPLICATION OF THE --

11:26AM 6 THE OPERATOR: THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED.

11:26AM 7 MR. WILLEN: -- I THINK IS VERY TELLING.

11:26AM 8 SO WITH THAT I WILL TURN IT OVER TO MS. WHITE AND LET HER
11:26AM 9 TALK ABOUT THE LANHAM ACT AND ANYTHING ELSE THAT SHE WANTS TO
11:26AM 10 SAY IN RESPONSE TO WHAT WE HAVE HEARD.

11:26AM 11 THE COURT: THANK YOU, MR. WILLEN.

11:26AM 12 MS. WHITE.

11:26AM 13 MS. WHITE: THANK YOU.

11:26AM 14 I'LL BEGIN JUST BRIEFLY ON THE LANHAM ACT QUESTION. AS
11:27AM 15 YOUR HONOR CORRECTLY RECOGNIZED, TO STATE A CLAIM UNDER THAT
11:27AM 16 STATUTE PLAINTIFFS HAVE TO ALLEGE THAT YOUTUBE MADE A FALSE OR
11:27AM 17 MISLEADING STATEMENT IN COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING, AND THEY
11:27AM 18 HAVEN'T DONE THAT. THEY REFER TO STATEMENTS ABOUT WHAT
11:27AM 19 RESTRICTED MODE DOES AND WHAT RESTRICTED GUIDELINES ARE, BUT
11:27AM 20 THOSE STATEMENTS ARE WHAT THE NINTH CIRCUIT HELD WERE NOT
11:27AM 21 COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN PRAGER.

11:27AM 22 THEY ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE DESIGNATION OF SOME OF
11:27AM 23 PLAINTIFFS' VIDEOS, AND I'LL NOTE THAT I THINK ONLY FOUR OF THE
11:27AM 24 NAMED PLAINTIFFS SPECIFICALLY ALLEGE THAT ANY OF THEIR VIDEOS
11:27AM 25 HAVE BEEN MADE UNAVAILABLE IN UNRESTRICTED MODE, BUT WITH

11:27AM 1 RESPECT TO THOSE, THEY ARGUE THAT THAT DESIGNATION SOMEHOW
11:27AM 2 BRANDS THEM IN A NEGATIVE LIGHT, BUT THE NINTH CIRCUIT
11:27AM 3 ADDRESSED THAT ARGUMENT DIRECTLY AS WELL AND HELD THAT THAT
11:27AM 4 DESIGNATION IS NOT MADE IN COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING PROMOTION AND
11:28AM 5 THAT'S ON PAGE 1,000 OF THE COURT'S OPINION.

11:28AM 6 FINALLY, ANY IMPLICIT STATEMENT ABOUT THE REASON FOR WHY
11:28AM 7 PLAINTIFFS' VIDEOS WERE MADE UNAVAILABLE IN RESTRICTED MODE,
11:28AM 8 ONE, THOSE REASONS WERE NOT MADE PUBLIC, AND, TWO, THOSE
11:28AM 9 REASONS WOULD BE A MATTER OF OPINION WHICH WOULD NOT BE
11:28AM 10 ACTIONABLE AS A FALSE STATEMENT, AND, AGAIN, NOT A STATEMENT
11:28AM 11 MADE IN FURTHERANCE OF COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING OR PROMOTION.

11:28AM 12 SO UNLESS YOUR HONOR HAS ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE
11:28AM 13 LANHAM ACT, I'LL JUST CONCLUDE BY ADDRESSING THE QUESTIONS
11:28AM 14 ABOUT THE UNRAH ACT CLAIM.

11:28AM 15 AS MY COLLEAGUE EXPLAINED, WE DO THINK THERE'S NO REASON
11:28AM 16 WHY SECTION 230(C) (1) AND (C) (2) (B) SHOULD NOT APPLY WITH
11:28AM 17 RESPECT TO PLAINTIFFS' CLAIM UNDER THE UNRAH ACT BUT IN
11:29AM 18 ADDITION TO THAT THE PLAINTIFFS HAVE NOT COME CLOSE TO STATING
11:29AM 19 A CLAIM.

11:29AM 20 THE UNRAH ACT, WHEN PLED HERE AS SEPARATE FROM AN ADA
11:29AM 21 VIOLATION, IS AN INTENTIONAL DISCRIMINATION STATUTE.
11:29AM 22 CALIFORNIA COURTS HAVE CLEARLY HELD THAT FACIALLY NEUTRAL
11:29AM 23 POLICIES ARE NOT ACTIONABLE AND THAT ALLEGATIONS OF DISPARATE
11:29AM 24 IMPACT ARE NOT ENOUGH.

11:29AM 25 THE COURT: OKAY. SO LET'S PAUSE THERE. THAT WAS

11:29AM 1 THE ARGUMENT YOU MADE IN YOUR BRIEF. THEIR ARGUMENT IS NOT
11:29AM 2 THERE'S A DISPARATE IMPACT, BUT THAT THERE'S AN ACTUAL POLICY
11:29AM 3 OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBT CONTENT CREATORS.

11:29AM 4 SO I KNOW YOU DON'T THINK THAT THAT'S ACTUALLY WHAT THEY
11:29AM 5 HAVE ALLEGED. BUT IF THAT'S THE ALLEGATION, DO YOU ALSO HAVE A
11:29AM 6 12(B) (6) ARGUMENT AGAINST -- FOR THE FAILURE TO STATE A CLAIM
11:29AM 7 UNDER THE UNRAH ACT ISSUE?

11:29AM 8 MS. WHITE: IF THERE WERE AN ALLEGATION THAT THERE
11:29AM 9 WERE AN ACTUAL AFFIRMATIVE POLICY TO DISCRIMINATE THAT MAY
11:29AM 10 STATE A CLAIM FOR THE UNRAH ACT, BUT THERE'S NOTHING CLOSE TO
11:30AM 11 THAT HERE. AND THERE'S A LOT OF RHETORIC. THE COMPLAINT IS --

11:30AM 12 THE COURT: RIGHT. WELL, HERE'S THE QUESTION THAT
11:30AM 13 NOBODY WAS TALKING ABOUT IN THEIR PAPERS, BUT I JUST WONDERED,
11:30AM 14 THE UNRAH ACT, YOU KNOW, IN THE ADA CONTEXT YOU HAVE TO HAVE A
11:30AM 15 PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION AND YOU WOULD HAVE TO HAVE A BUSINESS.

11:30AM 16 DOES THIS PLATFORM QUALIFY FOR -- IN THAT CONTEXT UNDER
11:30AM 17 THE LANGUAGE OF THE STATUTE?

11:30AM 18 MS. WHITE: SO THE UNRAH ACT APPLIES TO ALL BUSINESS
11:30AM 19 SERVICES AND THE CALIFORNIA COURTS HAVE HELD THAT THEY DIDN'T
11:30AM 20 APPLY TO WEBSITES.

11:30AM 21 I THINK THERE IS SOME AMBIGUITY IN PLAINTIFFS' CLAIMS
11:30AM 22 ABOUT EXACTLY WHAT -- WHO IS BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST AND ON
11:30AM 23 WHAT BASIS THAT THEY REFER TO MAINLY LGBTQ IDENTITIES. THEY
11:30AM 24 ALSO REFER TO VIEWPOINTS.

11:30AM 25 I THINK WHILE THE UNRAH ACT IS INTENDED TO BE CONSTRUED

11:31AM 1 BROADLY, THERE MAY BE SOME CATEGORIES OF PERSONS TO WHOM IT
11:31AM 2 WOULDN'T APPLY, BUT GIVEN THEIR FAILURE TO ALLEGE THAT THERE IS
11:31AM 3 IN FACT A POLICY OF DISCRIMINATION OR THAT THESE PLAINTIFFS
11:31AM 4 DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BASED ON THEIR SEXUAL IDENTITIES, THE
11:31AM 5 COURT DOESN'T NEED TO REACH THOSE QUESTIONS IN THIS CASE.

11:31AM 6 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU.

11:31AM 7 MR. OBSTLER, I'LL GIVE YOU A VERY BRIEF RESPONSE. I DON'T
11:31AM 8 WANT TO HEAR ANYTHING YOU HAVE TOLD ME BEFORE, BUT IF THERE'S A
11:31AM 9 VERY BRIEF RESPONSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE, I'LL LET YOU HAVE
11:31AM 10 THE LAST WORD.

11:31AM 11 MR. OBSTLER: THANK YOU SO MUCH, YOUR HONOR. AGAIN,
11:31AM 12 I REALLY APPRECIATE IT. AND YOUR QUESTIONS ARE DEAD ON ON
11:31AM 13 THIS.

11:31AM 14 FIRST OF ALL, ON DENVER AREA, IT WAS A SIX TO THREE
11:31AM 15 DECISION ON THE 10(C) PART OF THE OPINION AND PLEASE READ THE
11:31AM 16 OPINION.

11:31AM 17 THE COURT: I WILL MAKE SURE THAT I AM WELL VERSED
11:31AM 18 ON THE EXACT HOLDINGS OF --

11:31AM 19 THE OPERATOR: THE RECORDING HAS STOPPED.

11:32AM 20 MR. OBSTLER: ON THE UNRAH ACT ISSUE --

11:32AM 21 THE OPERATOR: THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED.

11:32AM 22 MR. OBSTLER: ON THE UNRAH ACT ISSUE, THE THING THAT
11:32AM 23 REALLY BOTHERS ME HERE IS THAT I FEEL LIKE I'M ARGUING A
11:32AM 24 FACTUAL ISSUE ON A 12(B)(6) MOTION.

11:32AM 25 WE HAVE ALLEGED THAT WE HAD A CLIENT WHO, OR WE WILL

11:32AM 1 ALLEGE IF YOU TAKE THE DECLARATION, WHO WENT TO A MEETING ON
11:32AM 2 2017 AND WAS TOLD TO HER FACE FOUR TIMES THAT THE ALGORITHM
11:32AM 3 IS --

11:32AM 4 THE COURT: YOU KNOW, I WILL READ -- I WILL MAKE
11:32AM 5 SURE THAT I LOOK AT ALL OF THE MANY, MANY ALLEGATIONS IN YOUR
11:32AM 6 COMPLAINT. SO I DON'T NEED YOU TO ARGUE AGAIN ABOUT WHETHER
11:32AM 7 THERE IS A POLICY OF DISCRIMINATION ALLEGED OR NOT.

11:32AM 8 I THINK I AM -- I HAVE THE COMPLAINT, AND I'M GOING TO
11:32AM 9 RELY ON THE COMPLAINT. THE PARTIES BRIEFED THAT ISSUE
11:32AM 10 EXTENSIVELY.

11:32AM 11 I'M REALLY TRYING TO SORT OUT THE LEGAL ISSUES HERE.

11:32AM 12 SO IS THERE SOMETHING FURTHER ON WHAT THE UNRAH ACT
11:33AM 13 REQUIRES OR NOT, THAT IS WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR. IF THERE'S
11:33AM 14 NOTHING ELSE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE ANYTHING.

11:33AM 15 MR. OBSTLER: THERE IS ONE OTHER THING.

11:33AM 16 THE COURT: OKAY.

11:33AM 17 MR. OBSTLER: YOU DON'T HAVE TO PLEAD THERE'S A
11:33AM 18 POLICY UNDER THE UNRAH ACT. ALL I HAVE TO SHOW UNDER THE
11:33AM 19 UNRAH ACT IS THAT THERE WAS AN ACT OF DISCRIMINATION, AND I
11:33AM 20 THINK WE HAVE DONE THAT. THAT WOULD BE MY LAST POINT.

11:33AM 21 THERE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A WRITTEN POLICY UNDER THE
11:33AM 22 UNRAH ACT. I DON'T THINK ANYBODY WOULD HAVE SUCH A POLICY.
11:33AM 23 OKAY.

11:33AM 24 THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH. I
11:33AM 25 APPRECIATE ALL OF THE PRESENTATIONS AND THE EXTENSIVE BRIEFING.

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AND I APPRECIATE YOU BEARING WITH OUR VERY FIRST ZOOM
WEBINAR. I WILL TAKE THIS MATTER UNDER SUBMISSION, AND I'LL
ISSUE A WRITTEN ORDER. ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

MR. WILLEN: THANK YOU, YOUR HONOR.

MR. OBSTLER: THANK YOU, YOUR HONOR. WE APPRECIATE
YOUR TIME.

(ZOOM COURT CONCLUDED AT 11:33 A.M.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, THE UNDERSIGNED OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, 280 SOUTH FIRST STREET, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, DO HEREBY CERTIFY:

THAT THE FOREGOING TRANSCRIPT, CERTIFICATE INCLUSIVE, IS A CORRECT TRANSCRIPT FROM THE RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED MATTER.



IRENE RODRIGUEZ, CSR, RMR, CRR
CERTIFICATE NUMBER 8074

DATED: JUNE 4, 2020