



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Matt Gress (R-4)

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Representative Matt Gress Announces Plan to Ban TikTok on State Devices

Plan seeks to keep critical information secure, strengthening public safety

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Arizona State Representative Matt Gress today announced the “No TikTok on Arizona Government Devices Act” – a statewide cybersecurity plan that bans the use of TikTok on devices utilized for state business and public service-related efforts. At this Wednesday’s House Government Committee meeting, Representative Gress, in coordination with Chairman Tim Dunn, will introduce an amendment to HB 2416 that includes the TikTok ban.

“When I was sworn into office, I took an oath to defend my constituents and all Arizonans from enemies both foreign and domestic,” said Representative Gress. **“This legislation fulfills this promise as the security risks associated with the use of TikTok – an application owned and operated by the Chinese Communist Party with the capabilities of gathering crucial details about personal, private internet activity – can’t be ignored.”**

No later than 30 days after enactment, this legislation would require the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA), consistent with all other existing information security statutes, to develop standards, guidelines, and practices for executive agencies, departments, and other government entities to remove the social network service, TikTok, from all information technology devices utilized for the purpose of state business and public service. Additionally, ADOA will annually update the list of applications that may pose a cybersecurity threat to public safety.

“As public servants, we have a responsibility to do the right thing and keep our constituents safe,” said State Representative Tim Dunn, Chairman of the Government Committee. **“I’m proud to support this comprehensive, common-sense legislation being introduced by Representative Gress. Together, we will ensure the private information of all Arizonans is secure.”**

In a U.S. House Homeland Security Committee hearing, the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Director Christopher Wray, testified the FBI had many “national security concerns” about the use of TikTok on American government devices. He stated, “[Our concerns] include the possibility that the Chinese government could use it to control data collection on millions of users or control the recommendation algorithm, which could be used for influence operations if they so choose, or to control software on millions of devices, which gives it an opportunity to potentially technically compromise personal devices.” TikTok officials have confirmed that China-based TikTok employees can see U.S.-based data.

“Recently, Chinese Intelligence purposefully sent a spy balloon over our nation’s most sensitive military bases to gather critical security information,” Representative Gress added. “The Chinese government has no interest in collaborative relations with the United States of America.”

Nearly half of all U.S. states have passed similar policies banning TikTok on state government devices. And, in December, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed legislation, introduced by Republican Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri, to ban TikTok on all federal government devices.

President Joe Biden, for his part, has yet to acknowledge the threat posed by the app. When recently pressed on whether Washington would finalize the ban on TikTok, Biden replied, “I’m not sure. I know I don’t have it on my phone.”

Matt Gress is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 4 in Phoenix. He also serves as Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Budgetary Funding Formulas. Follow him on Twitter at @MatthewGress.

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