

## Hon. Marilyn Musgrave

Vice President of Government Affairs, Susan B. Anthony List

Good afternoon, Chairman Cruz and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this vitally important matter.

Susan B. Anthony List is a nationwide network of more than 700,000 Americans. Our mission is to end abortion by electing national leaders and advocating for laws that save lives. We invest heavily in voter education to ensure that pro-life Americans know where their lawmakers stand on protecting the unborn, and in issue advocacy, advancing pro-life laws through direct lobbying and grassroots campaigns.

Social media communications are essential to advancing that mission. [More than two billion people worldwide, and nearly 80 percent of the United States population](#), use social media. If we do not have a strong presence online and the ability to reach our target audience, we might as well be invisible.

SBA List has been fighting censorship of our content for more than two years. On March 8, 2017, SBA List promoted four tweets from our president, Marjorie Dannenfelser. One was immediately rejected with Twitter citing violation of their “Health and pharmaceutical products and services policy.” *It was a quote by Mother Teresa.* Two more tweets were rejected the same day.

On April 12, 2017 SBA List started a Twitter ad campaign urging constituents to ask a legislator to pass a health care bill that stops taxpayer funding of Planned Parenthood – the nation’s largest abortion business, which aborts more than 332,000 unborn children and receives more than half a billion dollars in taxpayer funding every year. Hours later, Twitter informed us that our account was ineligible to participate in Twitter ads, citing the same policy. No explanation of exactly how SBA List violated the policy was provided even after we inquired.

During this same time period, Planned Parenthood was permitted to run [ads very similar to ours](#).

In September 2017, Twitter blocked an SBA List video ad advocating John Adams for attorney general of Virginia, stating that it was unacceptable to use the phrase “*killing babies*” in an ad.

Our experience on Facebook has been similar. Between October 9 and November 1, 2018, Facebook banned seven of our paid ads supporting candidates. Brief images of premature babies born at 22-24 weeks, when unborn children can be legally aborted, were deemed “*sensational or graphic content.*” SBA List appealed and Facebook apologized, saying the ad should never have been disapproved – but *less than two hours later* another one of our ads was blocked.

Perhaps most absurd of all, Facebook and Google blocked our research and education arm Charlotte Lozier Institute’s video ads featuring patients who were helped by ethical adult stem cell treatment. Google claimed we were trying to sell pharmaceuticals.

Many pro-life groups have had their content arbitrarily blocked:

- YouTube removed an undercover [video](#) by **the Center for Medical Progress**.
- Twitter to this day refuses to allow ads from **Live Action** citing a policy against “*inflammatory or provocative content,*” and expects them to scrub content from their own website – but [Planned Parenthood has recently spent more than \\$100K in Twitter ads](#).
- Twitter blocked a campaign ad from **Rep. Marsha Blackburn** discussing her efforts “to stop the sale of body parts” by Planned Parenthood, reversing themselves after a firestorm of criticism.
- The Twitter account for **the movie “Unplanned”** was [suspended on opening weekend](#), allegedly for being “*linked to another account that had violated Twitter’s rules,*” then restored.

Once or twice could arguably be written off as a mistake – but as our experience shows and as one writer for the [Wall Street Journal pointed out](#), it's a “mistake” that keeps happening over and over and demonstrates a pattern of censorship toward the pro-life viewpoint *specifically*.

Big social media companies wield enormous power to control speech and choose which viewpoints will be favored or disfavored. Facebook's Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg [stated in an interview](#) that “When you cut off speech for one person, you cut off speech for other people.” We are asking for them to live up to their own professed values and end the discrimination. Thank you for your efforts to hold them accountable.