

May 27, 2022

Dear Sergey Brin, Larry Page, and Eric Schmidt,

We, the undersigned civil society organizations, write to urge you to support shareholder proposal 9 on Alphabet's 2022 proxy, calling on the board of directors to conduct a third-party, independent racial equity audit analyzing the company's adverse impacts on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

Alphabet's impressive global reach lends the company enormous power to shape what our communities see, read, think, and buy. However persistent reporting has identified numerous areas where Alphabet's often ubiquitous products, technologies, and policies may be enabling or directly fomenting racial injustice. YouTube has been routinely implicated in promoting white supremacist ideology and anti-Muslim propaganda to young users.¹ Research also shows that Google's facial recognition technology is susceptible to a range of racial, ethnic, and gender biases, and the company has come under fire for retaliating against employees who point out discrimination in the workplace.²

These serious inequities betray Alphabet's vocal support for racial justice and human rights. In 2020, Google CEO Sundar Pichai stated that, "Strengthening our commitment to racial equity and inclusion will help Google build more helpful products for our users and the world,"³ and Alphabet has continued to release statements in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. Allowing allegations and inequities to flourish without investigation or accountability seriously undermines the company's commitments.

Other large companies have willingly undertaken racial equity audits.⁴ Meta COO Sheryl Sandberg lauded the company's civil rights audit as "a deep analysis of how we can strengthen and advance civil rights at every level of our company."⁵ Contrary to the misguided objections of Alphabet's management, experience shows that an independent audit is a valuable tool for assessing the progress of ongoing equity efforts, not a hindrance to those initiatives. Rejecting this shareholder proposal positions Alphabet as falling behind its peers.

As Class B shareholders, your support or abstention has the power to make or break this popular and necessary investor-led advocacy. We urge you to uphold Alphabet's principles and "do the right thing" by supporting proposal 9 for an independent racial equity audit.

Sincerely,

¹ <https://acrecampaigns.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FanningtheFlames-Oct2019.pdf> and <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/technology/facebook-youtube-twitter-black-lives-matter.html>

² <https://venturebeat.com/2021/09/03/bias-persists-in-face-detection-systems-from-amazon-microsoft-and-google/> and <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/12/23/google-timnit-gebru-ai-ethics/>

³ <https://blog.google/inside-google/company-announcements/commitments-racial-equity/>

⁴ <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/reports/Civil-Rights-Audit-Report-2021.pdf>

⁵ <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/07/civil-rights-audit-report/>

Access Now

Accountable Tech

ACRE

Alphabet Workers Union

American Friends Service Committee

Center for Digital Democracy

Color of Change

Fight for the Future

Free Press

Heartland Initiative

MediaJustice

Open MIC

Ranking Digital Rights