

**Title:** House Passes Bill Requiring Selling or Banning of TikTok

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In a 360 to 58 vote, the United States House of Representatives has passed a \$95 billion foreign aid package bill, which includes provisions related to the controversial social media application, TikTok. Specifically, the bill will require that TikTok be sold by ByteDance (its Chinese parent company) within 270 days. Failure to do so will result in a national ban of the popular application. Senate may vote on the bill as soon as next week, and President Biden intends to sign the bill into law if there is enough support in the Senate.

TikTok currently has 1.5 billion downloads and was originally launched in 2016 in China, although it now has headquarters in Los Angeles and Singapore. The data collected by TikTok is vast including your internet address, type of device, exact location, contents of every message, phone's contacts, age, phone number, and payment information. Concerns revolving around TikTok stem from the Chinese ownership of TikTok's parent company, which some believe poses large risks to national security, misinformation, election integrity, and data privacy. Specifically, there are concerns revolving around whether the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) controls content within the application or requires TikTok to provide the PRC with user data, which TikTok has denied.

The CEO of TikTok, Shou Zi Chew, testified before a House Energy and Commerce Committee on March 23, 2023 with focus on the influence over content, data collection, data storage, and data access. TikTok has been banned on executive agency devices per the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, and it has also been banned on many state-owned devices.

The U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment has negotiated with TikTok since 2020 to allow for U.S. operations as long as certain conditions are met. TikTok's plan to address concerns about national security risks is known as Project Texas, and includes provisions for a U.S. subsidiary (the U.S. Data Security) to manage the user data of users in the United States on Oracle's Cloud infrastructure.

The Biden Administration has sought a PRC divestiture from TikTok, which the PRC's Ministry of Commerce has said it would oppose. The recently signed foreign aid package bill is the latest attempt to mitigate national security risks by forcing the sale of TikTok or risking a national ban.