

# U.S. Committee on Oversight and Reform: Grothman: We must protect veterans from scams

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WASHINGTON — Subcommittee on National Security Ranking Member Glenn Grothman (R-Wis.) opened today's subcommittee hearing by underscoring the importance of protecting our veterans from schemes that target their sensitive information. Grothman emphasized how the federal government must find solutions to these nefarious practices and keep pace with the ever-evolving schemes created by bad actors. Grothman underscored how foreign-owned apps like TikTok are being used to surveil U.S. users and gather data. Grothman closed by thanking the witnesses for appearing before the subcommittee to discuss finding solutions to end scams targeting our veterans.

**Below are Subcommittee Ranking Member Grothman's remarks as prepared for delivery.**

*Thank you, Chairman Lynch.*

*I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to highlight the importance of protecting our veterans from schemes that target their sensitive information.*

*The 2021 AARP report about veteran scams paints a damning picture of the sad reality we find ourselves in today.*

*A reality in which bad actors scam our nation's greatest and steal their sensitive financial and user data.*

*In short, the report found that veterans, military, and their families are significantly more likely to be targeted by scam artists than the average American.*

*We must swiftly bring these con artists to justice and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law.*

*A huge problem in my district and a practice that was identified in the report are robocalls. My constituents and many Americans report receiving several of these robocalls a week. The federal government must find solutions to this unwelcomed practice that will continue to increase as scammers become more and more creative.*

*Upon leaving active military service, veterans are confronted with a new set of personal challenges.*

*This ever-evolving threat environment extends far beyond the traditional robocalls and phishing emails.*

*One of the most famous social media apps in the world - TikTok - is a sophisticated surveillance tool masquerading as a short form video service.*

*TikTok is owned by Beijing-based ByteDance, which presents an extraordinary set of national security concerns.*

*It was recently reported that individuals in China had access to U.S. user data.*

*This is not only a massive national security risk but also poses a threat to military members, veterans, and their families.*

*The Chinese government, who the FBI director just last week said was the "biggest long-term threat to our economic and national security," has the sensitive data of millions and millions of Americans at their fingertips - including veterans and servicemembers.*

*This data goes far beyond what genre of 30-second videos someone prefers to watch.*

*It includes browsing history, biometric data, location data, metadata, and a trove of other sensitive and personal data.*

*This data can be utilized by the Chinese government to exploit American citizens and gain a security edge.*

*By-no-means political, the national challenge that TikTok presents is a bipartisan concern.*

*Mr. Chairman, in 2019 you wrote that "[g]iven the pervasiveness of smartphone technology in the United States... foreign adversaries may be able to collect sensitive information about U.S. citizens, which presents serious and immediate risks for U.S. national security."*

*I agree, Mr. Chairman, and believe that we cannot have a conversation about veteran scams without talking about the information theft that is occurring on foreign owned apps like TikTok.*

*I thank all of the witnesses for appearing today and look forward to a robust discussion about the unique threat environment facing our veterans today.*

*Thank you, Chairman Lynch, and I yield back.*