

## Racial Equity Audit

**RESOLVED:** Shareholders urge the Board of Directors to commission a third-party, independent racial equity audit analyzing Alphabet Inc.'s impacts on Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Input from racial justice and civil rights organizations and employees, temporary vendors, and contractors should be considered in determining specific matters to be analyzed. A report on the audit, prepared at reasonable cost and omitting confidential and proprietary information, should be published on Alphabet's website.

**WHEREAS:** The harmful and often deadly impacts of systemic racism on BIPOC communities are a major focus of policymakers, media, and the public. Alphabet has made charitable contributions and statements of solidarity with communities of color but must do more to address its impacts on these communities.

In 2021, five U.S. Senators urged Alphabet to “conduct a racial equity audit...to make the company and its products safer for Black people,” saying “Google Search, its ad algorithm, and YouTube have all been found to perpetuate racist stereotypes and white nationalist viewpoints.”<sup>1</sup> Research suggests, “YouTube plays a key role in exposing young people to white supremacist ideology and anti-Muslim propaganda.”<sup>2</sup>

Google's artificial intelligence (AI) tools also have the potential to adversely impact communities of color. Researchers found that an AI tool developed to detect hate speech was up to twice as likely to identify tweets as offensive when they were written with African American Vernacular English or by African Americans.<sup>3</sup> Research also found that Google's face detection technology is susceptible to a range of racial biases.<sup>4</sup> There are also concerns that Google's technology may be used by the government to surveil immigrants.<sup>5</sup>

Despite these and other issues, Alphabet has allegedly retaliated against employees who raised concerns.<sup>6</sup> In 2020, nine lawmakers expressed concern after Google fired the co-lead of its AI Ethics team. In 2021, employees told reporters<sup>7</sup> that when they reported workplace racism, they were told to “assume good intent,” seek counseling, or take leave. A lawsuit filed by a former employee in March 2022 asserted that “Google is engaged in a nationwide pattern or practice of intentional race discrimination and retaliation and maintains employment policies and practices that have a disparate impact against Black employees throughout the United States.”<sup>8</sup> Concerns have also been raised that Google is ignoring caste bias and at least one employee resigned after plans to discuss the issue were cancelled.<sup>9</sup>

Attorneys from the prominent law firm Katten recently noted in Bloomberg Law that, “Promoting racial justice is the right thing to do and is also a good business practice that may lead to higher profits and a

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.booker.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/booker\\_colleagues\\_urge\\_major\\_tech\\_conglomerate\\_alphabet\\_inc\\_to\\_conductracialequityauditontheirproducts.pdf?utm\\_campaign=wp\\_the\\_technology\\_202&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&wpisrc=nl\\_technology202](https://www.booker.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/booker_colleagues_urge_major_tech_conglomerate_alphabet_inc_to_conductracialequityauditontheirproducts.pdf?utm_campaign=wp_the_technology_202&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&wpisrc=nl_technology202)

<sup>2</sup> <https://acrecampaigns.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FanningtheFlames-Oct2019.pdf>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.newscientist.com/article/2213064-googles-hate-speech-detecting-ai-appears-to-be-racially-biased/#ixzz771qKjsPa>

<sup>4</sup><https://venturebeat.com/2021/09/03/bias-persists-in-face-detection-systems-from-amazon-microsoft-and-google/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://theintercept.com/2020/10/21/google-cbp-border-contract-anduril/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.engadget.com/nlrb-google-complaint-expansion-212411947.html>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/google-advised-mental-health-care-when-workers-complained-about-racism-n1259728>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.classaction.org/media/curley-v-google-llc.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/06/02/google-caste-equality-labs-tanuja-gupta/>

sharper competitive advantage. Racial equity audits are an excellent tool to ensure this is all happening.”  
<sup>10</sup> We urge Alphabet to join peers like Apple, Amazon, and Facebook and commit to undertake an independent racial equity audit.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/how-proactive-racial-equity-audits-can-increase-company-profits>