

May 3, 2023
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
10:00 AM EST
AARS/ACCO MEETING WITH ENERGY AND COMMERCE, COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY
SUBCOMMITTEE

Today, May 3, 2023, Co-Founders of [Advocating Against Romance Scammers](#) (AARS), Bryan Denny, and Kathy Waters, attended a virtual meeting with their Partner [Alliance to Counter Crime Online](#)'s (ACCO) CEO and Co-Founder, Gretchen Peters, along with a Staff Member from the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Communication and Technology Subcommittee.

FOCUS

Our primary purpose of the meeting today was to voice and educate our [concerns to CDA 230](#) regarding the verbiage that has allowed freedom of speech into becoming a “get out of jail free” card for Big Tech. CDA 230 gives immunity to Social Media Platforms for anything a third-party posts to their site. When this law was established in 1996, the thought of social media being utilized as a criminal highway had yet to surface. Today, it's the most efficient way romance scammers and other cyber criminals can “conduct their business”. The “Office Landlords” (BIG TECH) are legally not responsible for the crimes that take place upon their platforms, even when having the knowledge about the criminal activity. In the REAL world, this is referred to as being an Accessory to a Crime, which is a chargeable offense.

AARS also had the opportunity to share the amount of money the IC3 reported leaving the US in 2022, not just from Confidence/Romance Scams, but investment scams (large portion from pig butchering {romance/investment scams}). Bryan spoke on the effects of one's image being stolen to conduct such heinous crimes, while Kathy spoke on the organized crime groups flooding the platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, TikTok and LinkedIn, for the almighty dollar. .

A.I.

The E&C staff member was very receptive to our education and questioned in what way [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) would affect the online romance scams world](#). The great thing about this question was the acknowledgement of how AI could be used to harm individuals. A huge gain since the creation of CDA 230, when the thoughts of potential harm and usage as a cybercrime portal were nonexistent. Does this mean congress may be trying to keep up with the latest technological consequences? Possibly. It's fantastic that the thinking is commencing!

MOVEMENT

In the 27 years of this law's existence, the CDA 230 has only been amended one time. We are all aware how technology rapidly changes, and this law is one that is necessary to review on a consistent basis. Fortunately, the E&C representative agreed, and stated that their team also feels the law needs amending, and confirming there are plans in the works to make this happen within the next few months! AWESOME NEWS!

WRAP UP

The meeting lasted approximately 40/45 minutes. Concluding with the understanding that E&C is in the motion of making changes for the safety of all social media users. This was music to our ears and a wonderful start to a very long process/fight that congress (and Big Tech) has in front of them. AARS and ACCO have since provided additional education on the subject matters of crimes online and romance scams to help others within the committee fully comprehend just how vital platform safety is. This was another promising meeting. Hope for not just the scammed survivors, but the identity theft victims as well.

NEXT...

On Monday, May 8th, we will be meeting with Rep. Jan Schakowsky's team where we will provide education on romance scams and how the scam has affected their state constituents emotionally, psychologically, and financially, along with millions of others all over the world. Rep. Schakowsky is a supporter of online safety, and a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Stay Tuned!