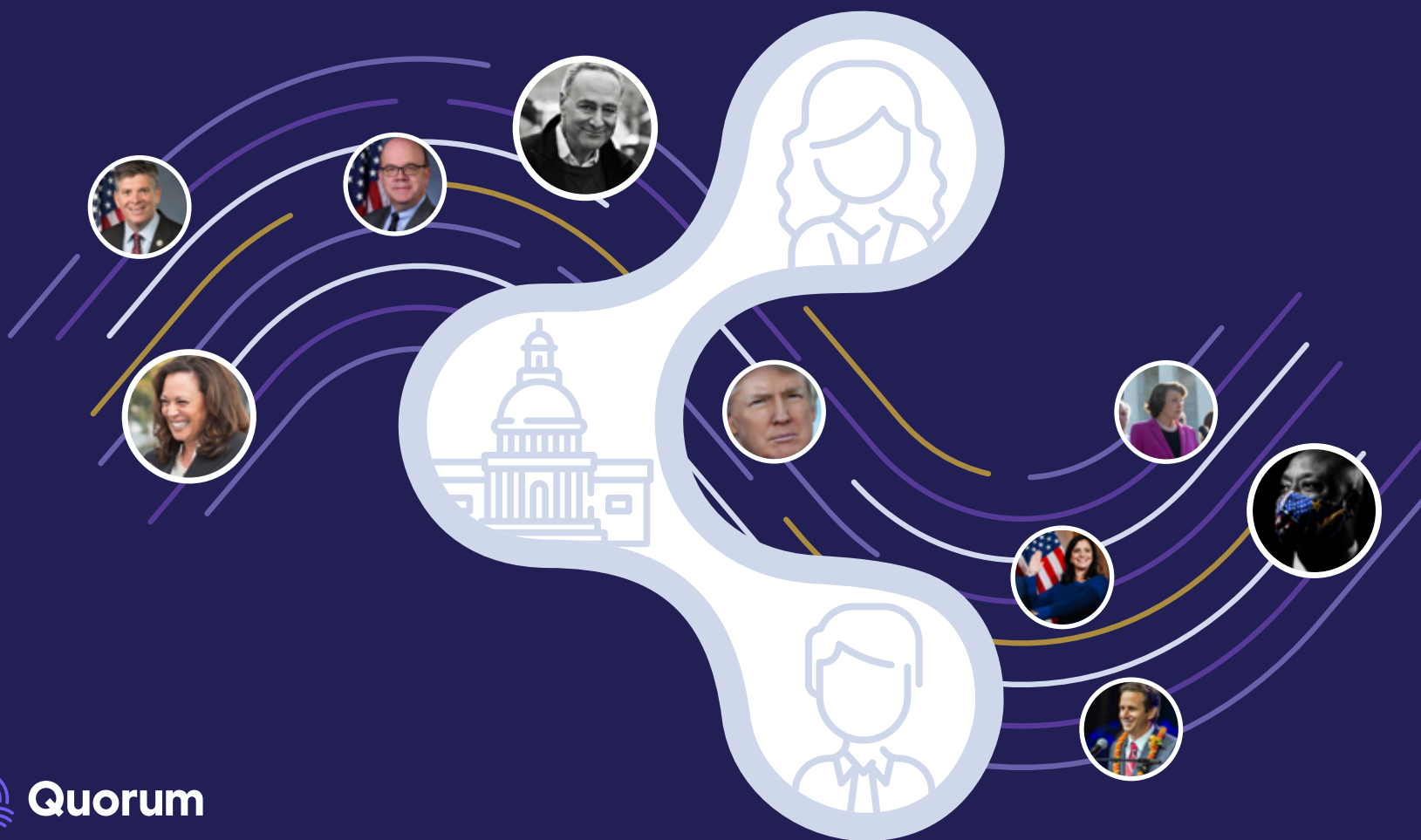


REPORT

Congress on Social Media 2020

| Pandemic Year Brings Increase in Social Dialogue, Decrease in Legislation





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Introduction

In 2020, Congress did a lot more posting on social media and a lot less legislating.

Overall, Congress posted on social media 784,614 times across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, compared to 715,124 times in 2019. Meanwhile, of the 5,117 bills Congress introduced in 2020, only 28 were enacted. Comparatively, 169 of the 8,364 bills introduced in 2019 eventually were signed by the President.

While the volume of legislation was low, its impact was significant and Twitter replaced floor debates in 2020. Memes and designed graphics replaced the classic floor posters you spot on CSPAN.

Despite negotiations only lasting a few days, Congress used #caresact 2901 times in 2020. The #heroesact never saw light in the Senate, but the hashtag was still used 4,767 times. While leadership debated legislation behind closed doors, social media provided a window to what the rest of Congress was looking for.

Methodology

Using Quorum Federal, this report analyzes nearly 800,000 posts made by members of the 116th Congress on official Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube accounts in 2020. The report covers activity from January 1, 2020 to November 30, 2020. For measuring the messages legislators wrote in their own words, Twitter data does not include retweets. Instagram and Facebook data does not include stories. The analysis in the report was made possible with Quorum's comprehensive social media monitoring and reporting tools.

Legislative numbers for bills enacted is based on the cohort of the year it was introduced. So, while 109 bills were officially enacted in 2020, our measurement of 28 is based on the cohort of 5,117 bills introduced in 2020. Both the 28 bills in the 2020 cohort and the 214 bills enacted by the 116th Congress are the lowest in decades.

Learn more at www.quorum.us/federal

A purple square icon containing a white bar chart with three bars of increasing height, two stars in the upper left, and a small dot at the bottom left.

Congress Social Media Habits

Percent of Officials on Each Platform | Page 5

Total Posts in 2020 | Page 6

Total Posts Per Day | Page 6

Party Breakdown | Page 6

Social Versus Bills | Page 7

Year Over Year Comparison | Page 8

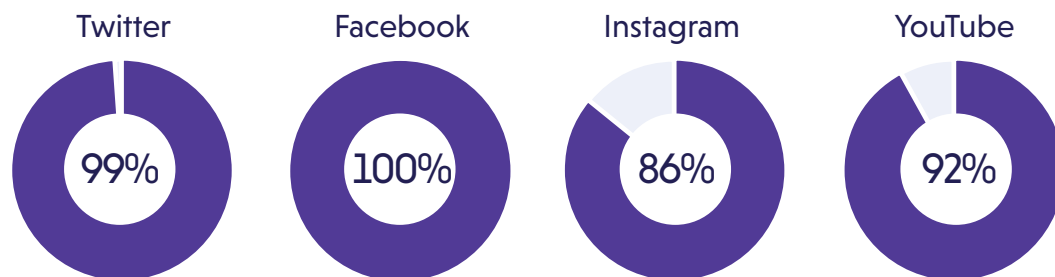
Social Posts Per Month | Page 8

Social Media by Age of Legislator | Page 9

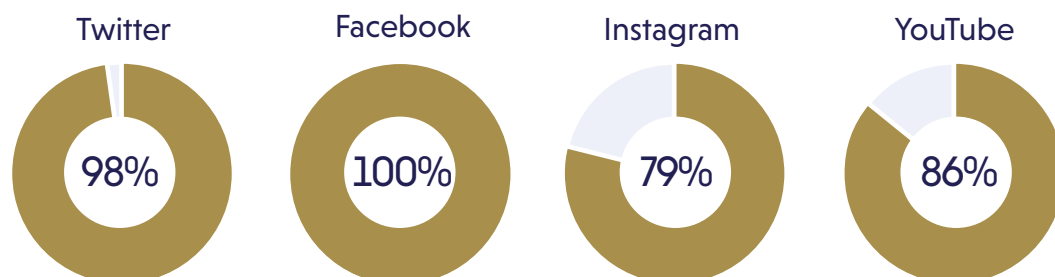
For Congress on social media in 2020, it was all about the written word. While Twitter and Facebook increased over 2019 numbers, Instagram and YouTube both saw declines. These mainly-visual platforms may have decreased due to COVID-19—there were no site visits, office photo ops with visitors, or trips around legislators' districts to photograph and video from mid-March onward.

Percent of Officials Who Posted in 2020

SENATE



HOUSE



11:28 AM · Nov 20, 2020 · Facebook

“I just launched my Instagram page. Follow along @replahood as I travel around central and west-central Illinois and represent the 18th Congressional District of Illinois in Washington!”



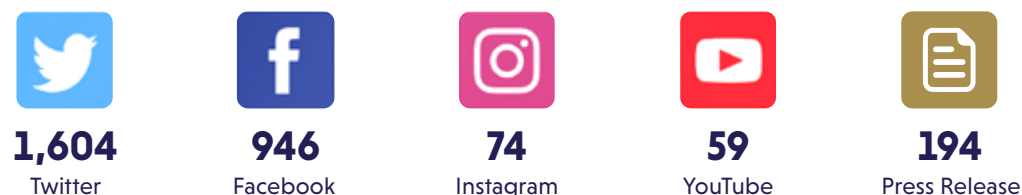
Representative
Darin LaHood
@replahood



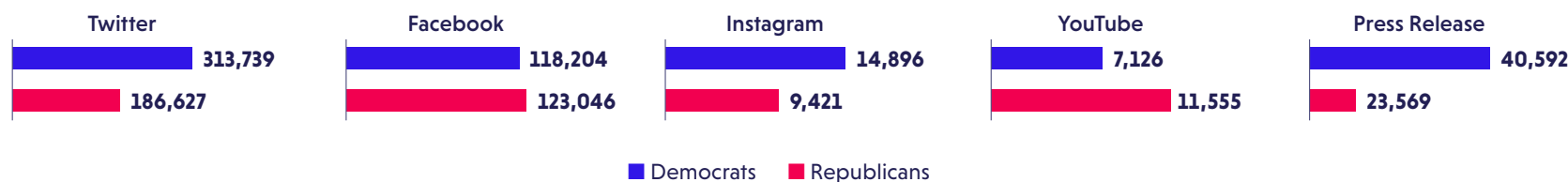
Total Posts Per Platform in 2020



Total Posts Per Platform Per Day



Total Posts—Party Breakdown



4:05 PM · Aug 25, 2020 · Facebook

“I’m pleased to welcome Congressman Dan Lipinski to our bipartisan School Choice Now Act with Senator Lamar Alexander, U.S. Representative Bradley Byrne, and Representative Mark Walker. The futures of America’s children are more important than politics. Let’s continue to work together for educational opportunities for students across this nation!”



Senator
Tim Scott
@SenatorTimScott



Social vs. Bills

Congress was increasingly active overall on social media in 2020, but did much less legislating than usual. In 2019, Congress tweeted 50 times for every one bill that was introduced and 2,489 times per one bill enacted. In 2020, that balance shifted dramatically: Congress tweeted 98 times per bill introduced and 17,912 times per bill enacted.

FOR EVERY ONE BILL INTRODUCED



98

Twitter



60

Facebook



5

Instagram



4

YouTube



13

Press Release

FOR EVERY ONE BILL ENACTED



17,912

Twitter



11,016

Facebook



874

Instagram



669

YouTube



2,312

Press Release

10:44 AM · Mar 8, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

“You can always assume that the tweeting about legislation is accompanied by legislating.”



Senator
Brian Schatz
@brianschatz



2:10 PM · Apr 30, 2020 · Facebook

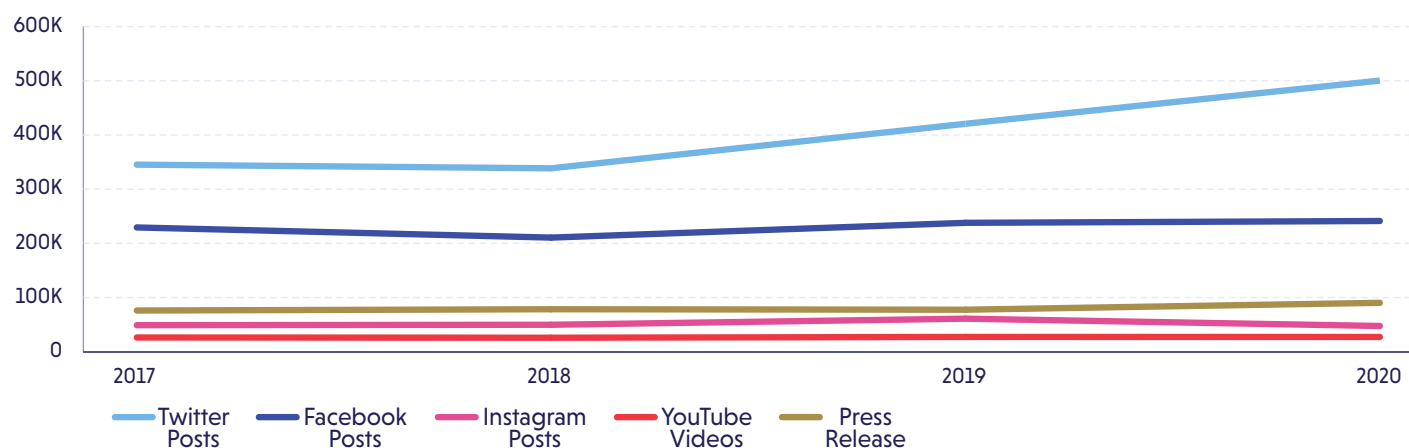
“Today, I’m announcing my new bill to create a COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force. We need a serious, targeted effort to address the reality that Black and brown people are disproportionately being infected and dying from COVID-19 across the nation.”



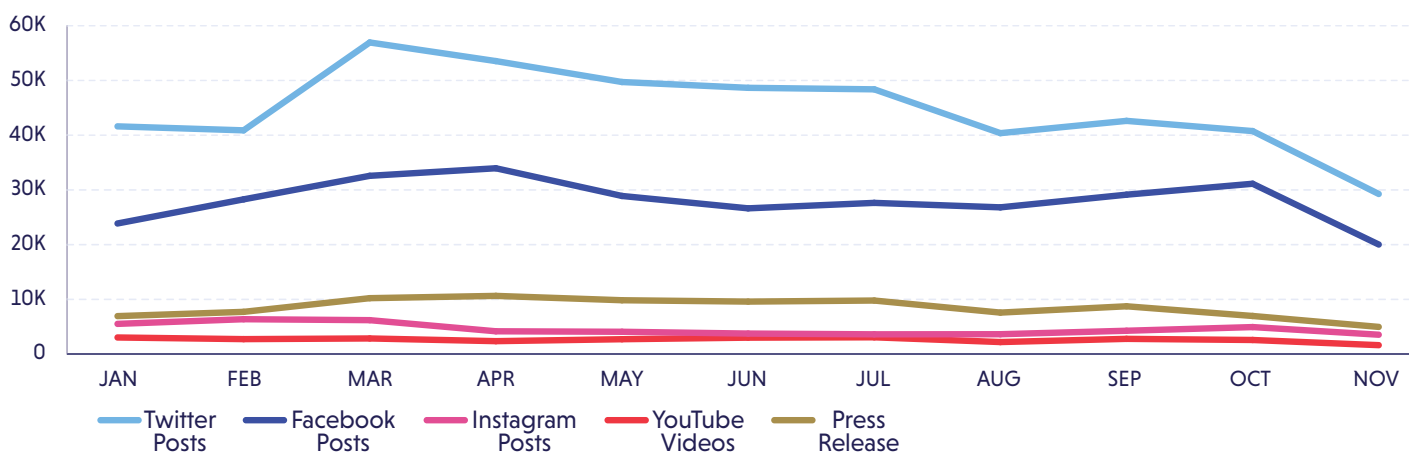
Senator
Kamala Harris
@SenatorKamalaHarris



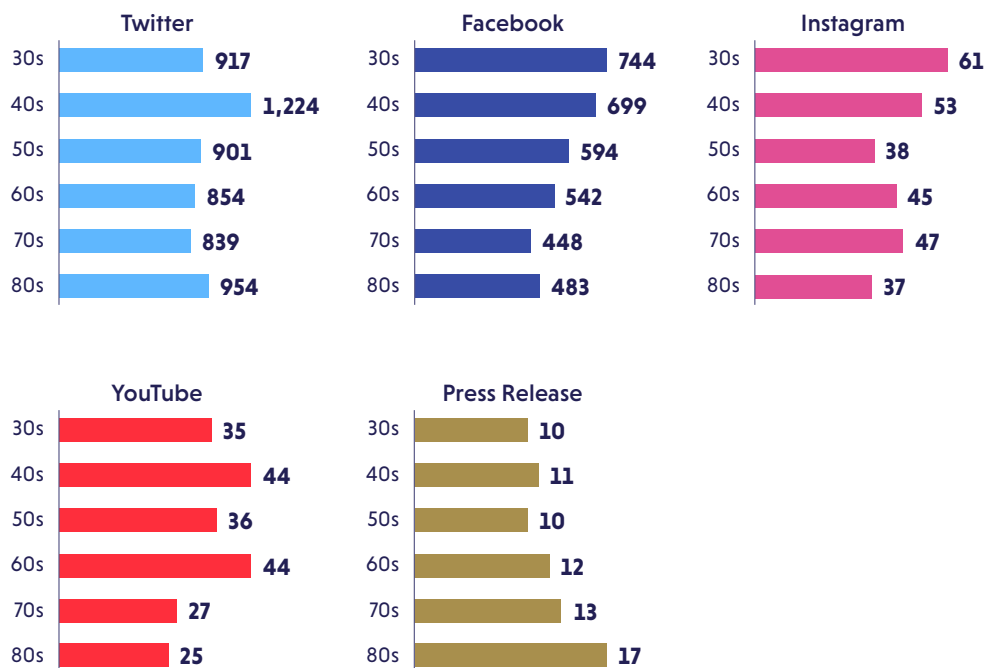
Total Posts Year Over Year



Social Posts by Month



Social Media by Age of Legislator



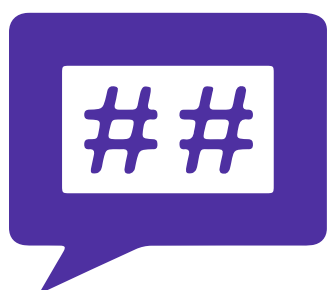
2:25 PM · Jan 17, 2020 · Twitter

“While many questions remain about the new coronavirus in China, reports that it could spread underscore the need to be fully prepared. I’ve asked @SecAzar what steps HHS is taking to ensure we’re ready should this outbreak escalate or another global health threat emerge.”



Senator
Dianne Feinstein
@SenFeinstein





Trending Dialogue

Top Hashtags **Overall** | Page 11

Top Hashtags by the **Senate** | Page 12

Top Hashtags by the **House** | Page 12

Top Hashtags by **Democrats** | Page 13

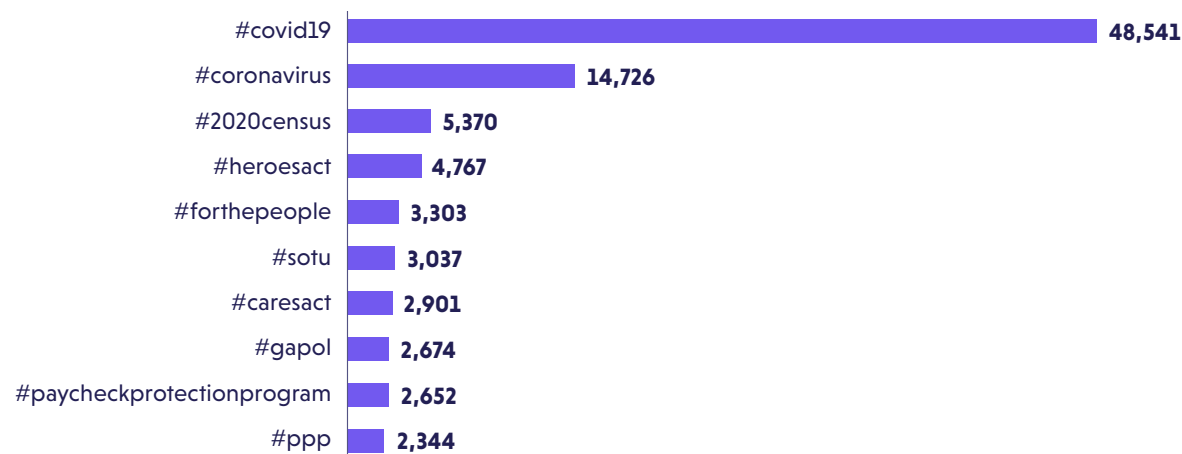
Top Hashtags by **Republicans** | Page 13

Top Hashtags by **Month** | Page 14

What topics dominated Congress' conversation on social media this year? You guessed it. COVID, COVID, COVID. #covid19 was the top hashtag of 2020 by a longshot with 48,541 posts using the tag. The second most popular hashtag? #coronavirus with 14,726. In total, 12.6% of all tweets from Congress in 2020 referenced #covid19 or #coronavirus. And that percentage would increase even more if you included COVID initiatives like the Paycheck Protection Program, vaccine and testing efforts, and the occasional post about legislators' hobbies during quarantine (remember Sen. Warner's tuna melt?).

Aside from COVID, Congress' other legislative conversations revolved around #2020census and #justiceinpolicing.

Top Hashtags Overall



9:33 PM · Mar 16, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

“I’m doing my best to keep you updated & informed in real time about our #COVID-19 response, but remember to turn off the news, go for a walk if you can, and take care of yourself, too.

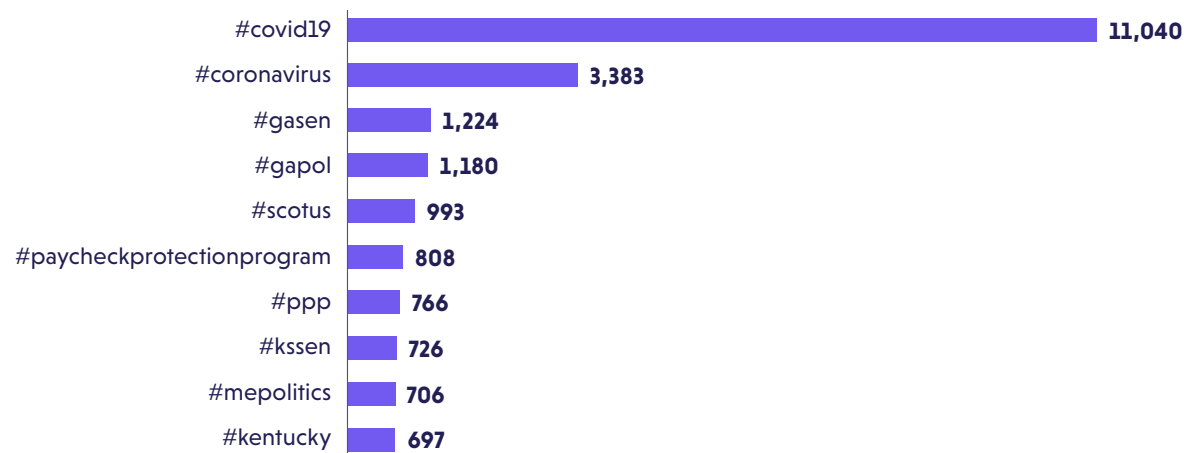
This is not an easy time, but if we come together as a community we will get through this.”



Representative
Jim McGovern
@RepMcGovern



Top Hashtags by the Senate



11:58 AM · Apr 22, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

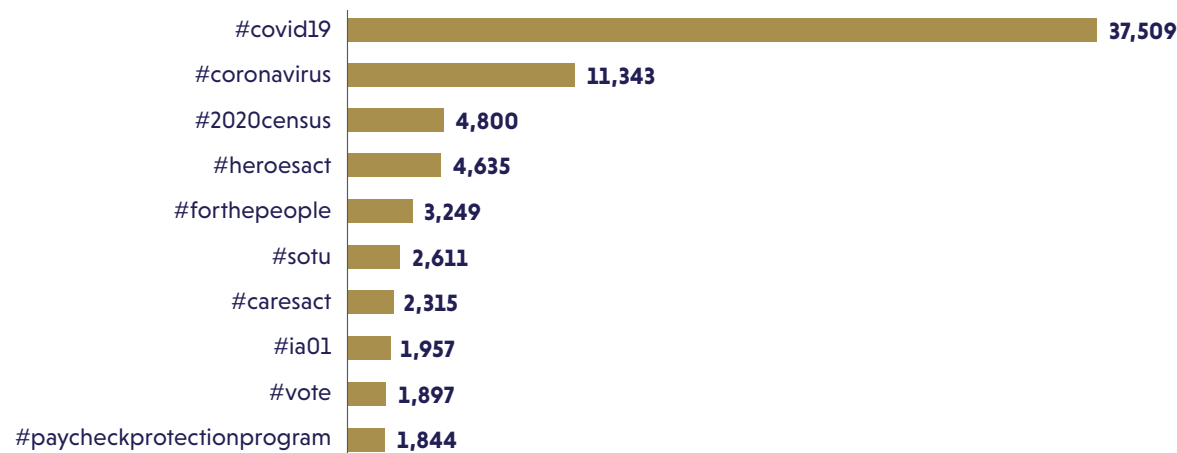
“There’s a reason you guys didn’t let me anywhere near the kitchen when I was on Top Chef! I’m gonna continue leaving the cooking to the professionals, and support my local restaurants in Congress and with lots of carry-out orders.”



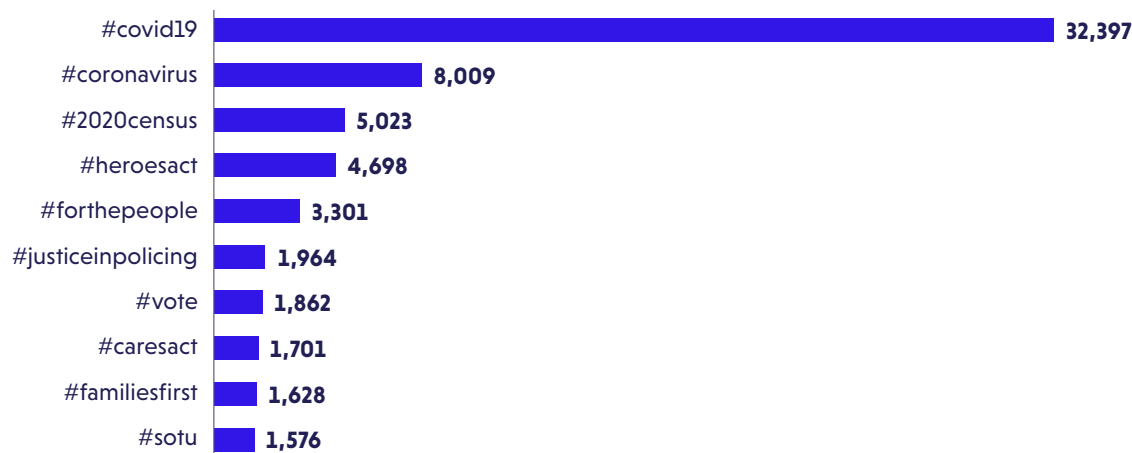
Senator
Mark Warner
@MarkWarner



Top Hashtags by the House



Top Hashtags by Democrats



3:59 PM · Nov 24, 2020 · Twitter Web App

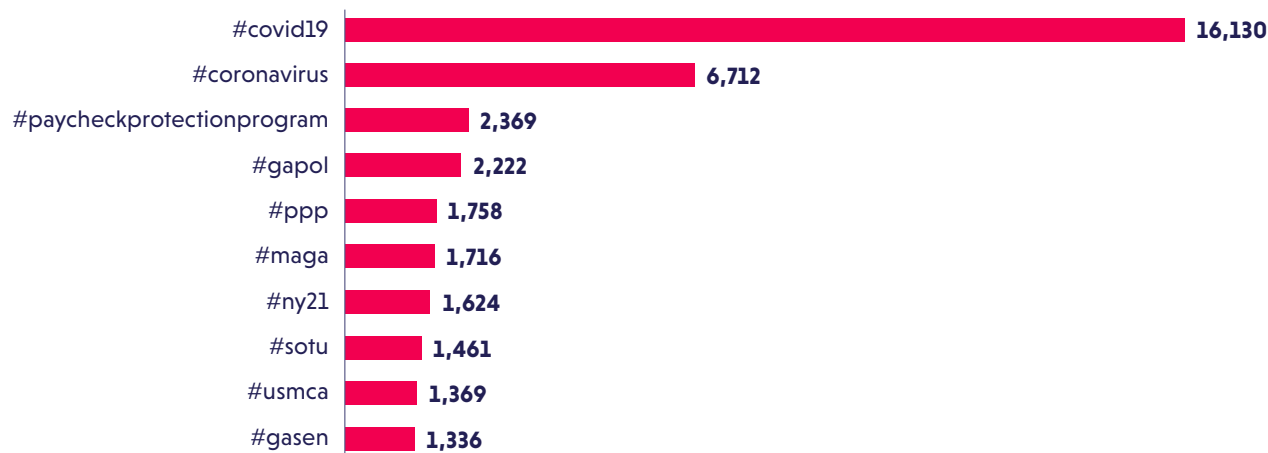
“Millions of American families expect to lose their homes if the Senate fails to pass more relief #ForThePeople. We must extend the eviction moratorium or risk forcing millions of people into homelessness in the middle of a pandemic.”



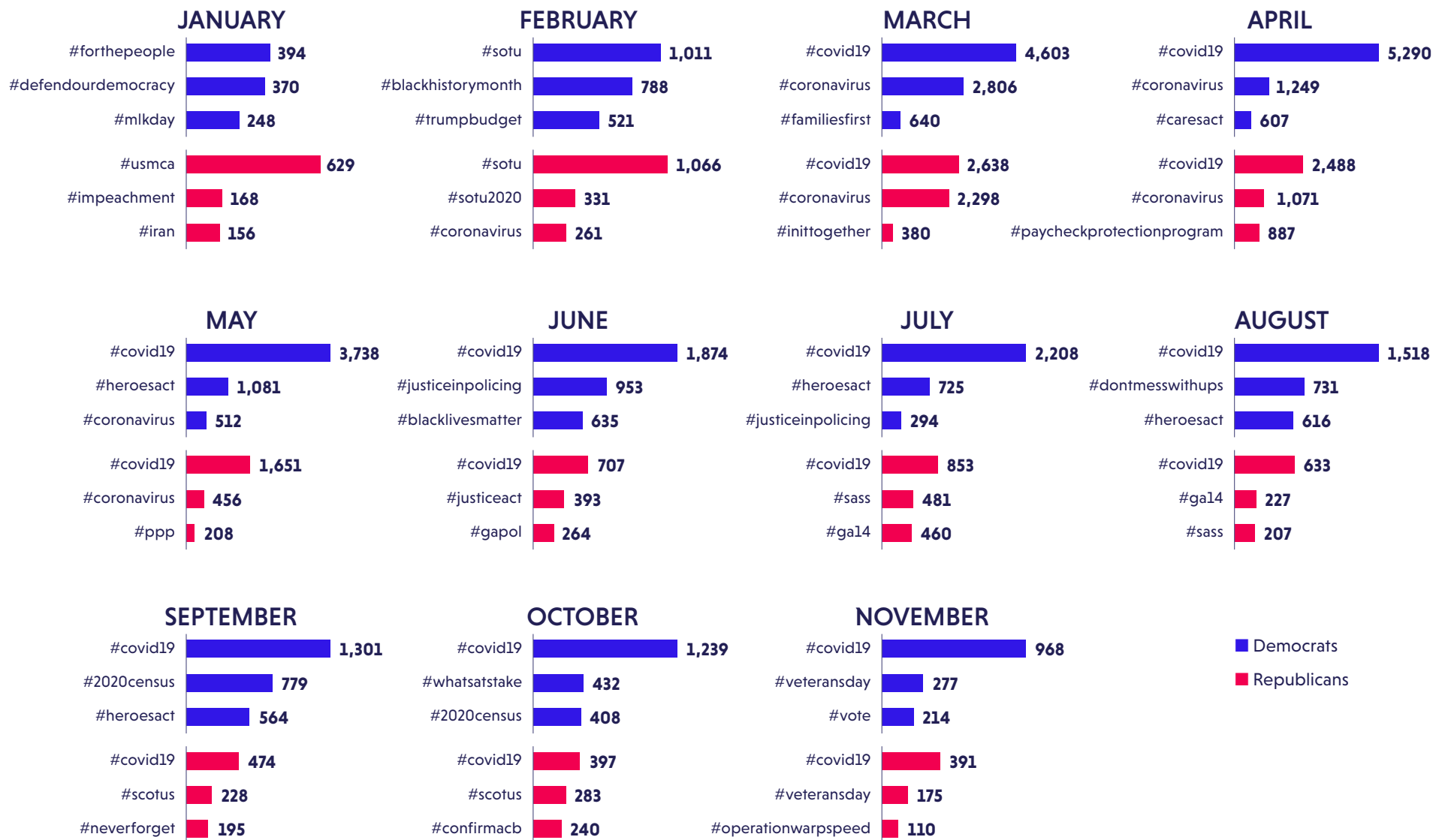
Representative
Emanuel Cleaver
@repcleaver

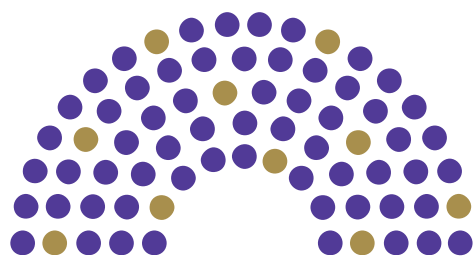


Top Hashtags by Republicans



Top Hashtags by Month





Social Media Leaders in the Senate

Most Active on **Twitter** | Page 16

Most Active on **Facebook** | Page 16

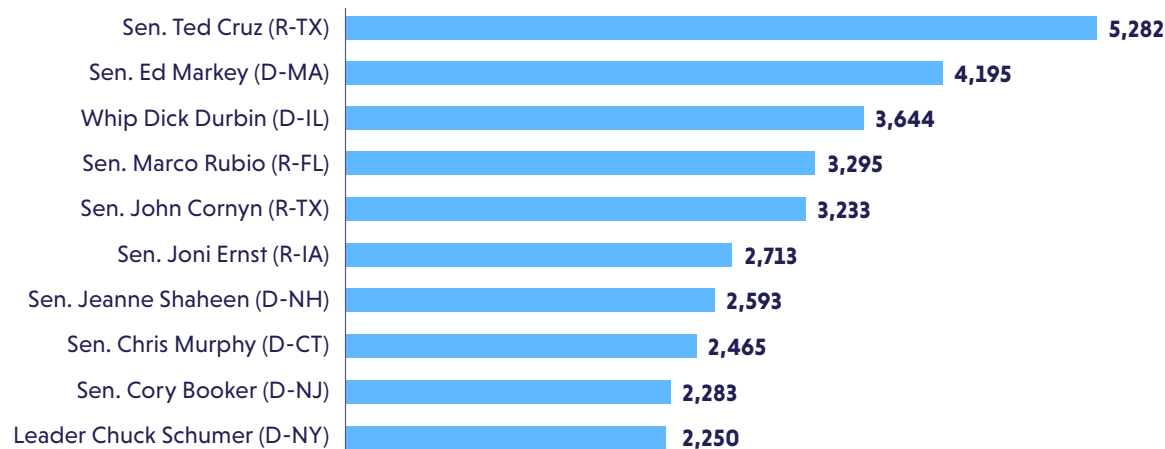
Most Active on **Instagram** | Page 17

Most Active on **YouTube** | Page 17

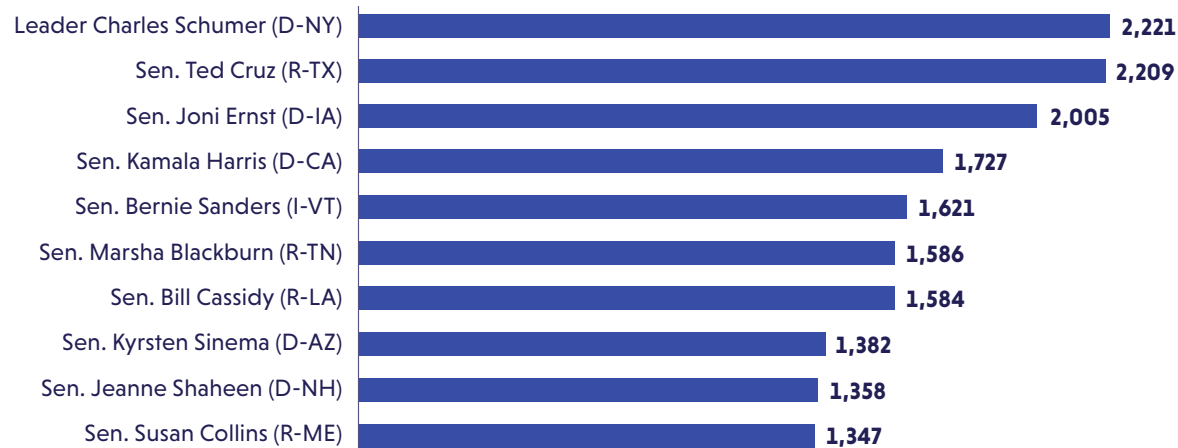
The Senate's social media volume is fairly distributed across the chamber, with 27 unique Senators appearing on at least one top 10 list across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Three senators found themselves on three of the four top ten lists — Sens. Cruz (R-TX), Markey (D-MA), and Ernst (R-IA). Despite the rapid confirmation process of Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett, Cruz managed to tweet 214 times this year mentioning #scotus. When not tweeting about COVID-19, Markey discussed the Green New Deal and net neutrality on social media. For Ernst, her #99countytour drove up her social numbers as she visited constituents across Iowa.

Most Active on Twitter



Most Active on Facebook



1:18 PM · Apr 28, 2020 · Facebook

“We’re showing our thanks for millions of immigrants—and many of our dreamers and our DACA and TPS recipients—who put their lives on the line doing essential jobs in this fight.

1.8M immigrants work in essential businesses in NY.

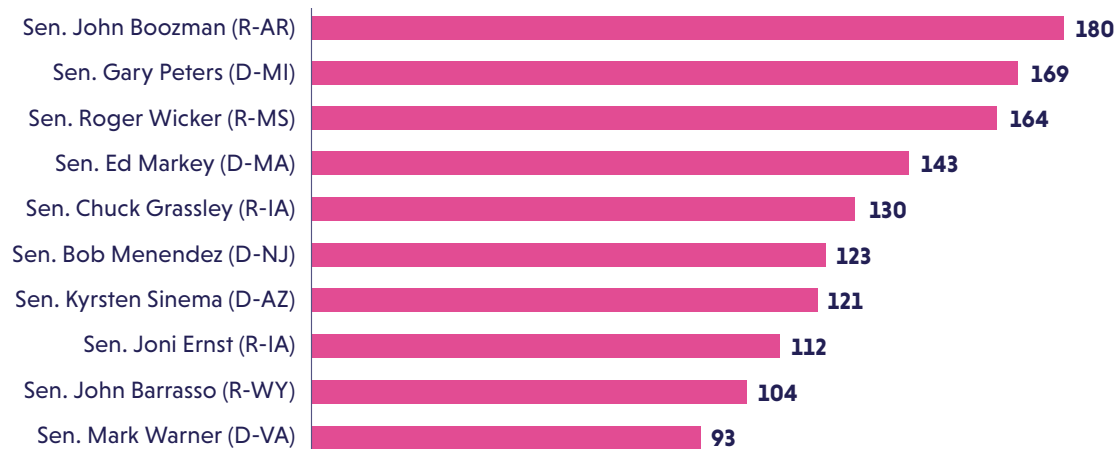
1/3 of the NY’s healthcare workers are immigrants.”



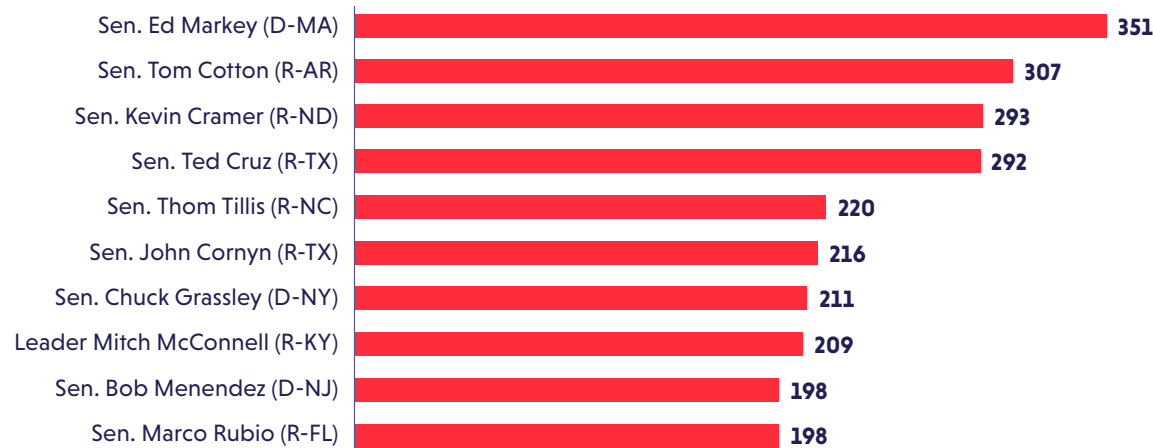
Senator
Chuck Schumer
@senschumer



Most Active on Instagram



Most Active on YouTube

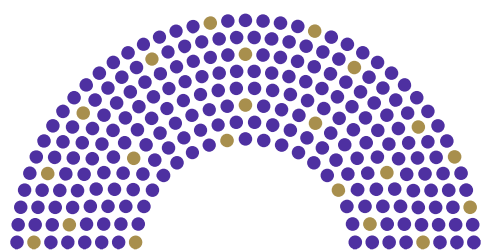


“Instagram offers us the opportunity to provide a unique, behind-the-scenes look at how Senator Boozman performs his duties...Since many constituents will never travel to Washington, D.C. or attend events with him in Arkansas, our regular updates with creative content share glimpses into aspects of the senator’s role, as well as his personality and background, that most people would otherwise never get to see. It’s also a fun way to exhibit charming scenes from around the nation’s capital and the Natural State — always a sure bet to please our audience, especially with the platform’s predominantly younger users.”



Matt Wester

Press Secretary/Digital Media Coordinator
for Senator John Boozman (R-AR)



Social Media Leaders in the House

Most Active on **Twitter** | Page 19

Most Active on **Facebook** | Page 19

Most Active on **Instagram** | Page 20

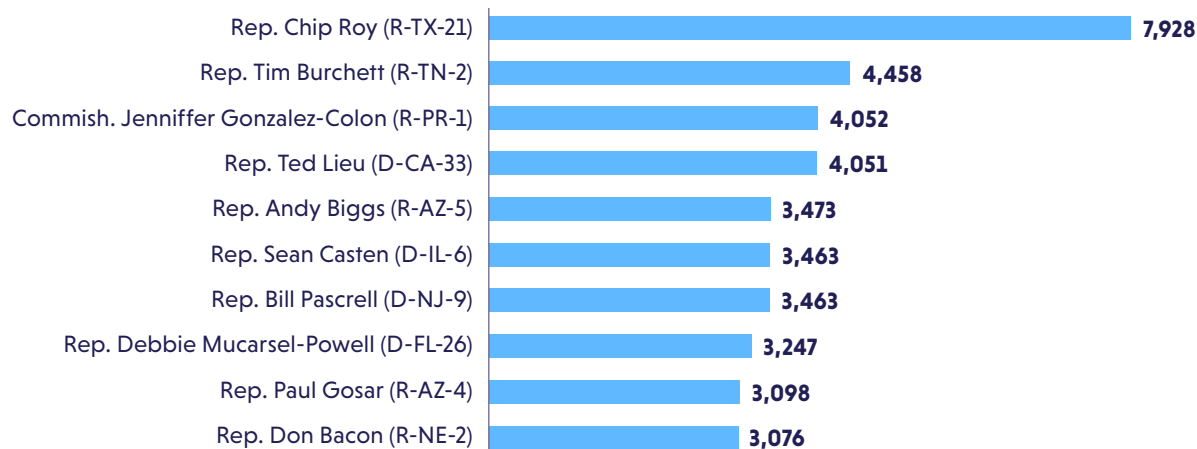
Most Active on **YouTube** | Page 20

The most active members on social media platforms from the House show you don't have to be a headlining name in order to use your owned media to get your message out there. High-profile house members like Nancy Pelosi, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Kevin McCarthy, and Dan Crenshaw don't crack the top ten on any platform. Meanwhile, rank-and-file members like Chip Roy, Elise Stefanik, French Hill, and Buddy Carter lead the pack across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, respectively.

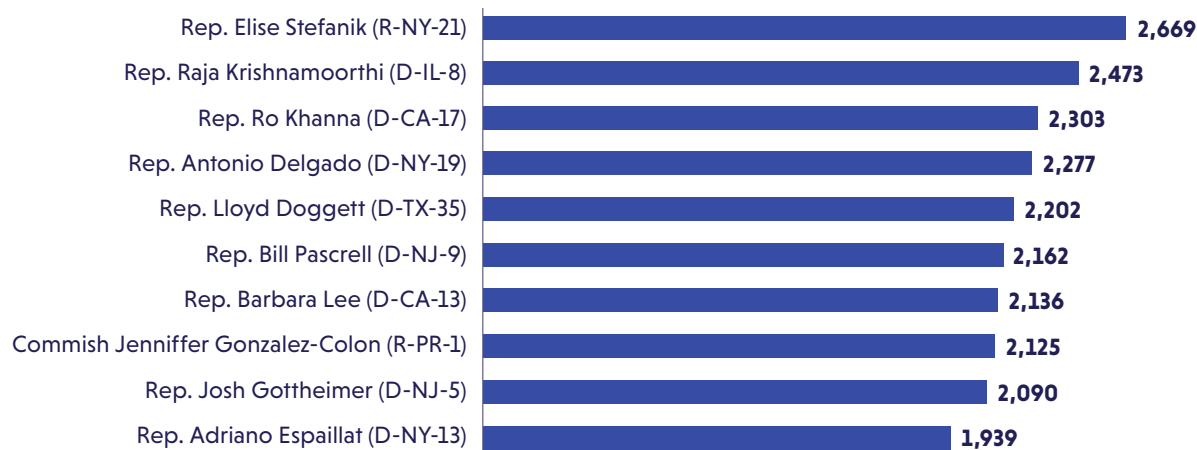
Roy and Carter both held their respective titles atop the Twitter and YouTube lists in 2019. Roy directly mentioned @realdonaldtrump in 365 tweets, while he also tweeted over 140 times about @Super7osSports. Carter's YouTube videos range from appearances on Fox News to reactions to policy proposals in Congress to reading children's books at local schools in his district.



Most Active on Twitter



Most Active on Facebook



9:37 AM · Nov 19, 2020 · Facebook

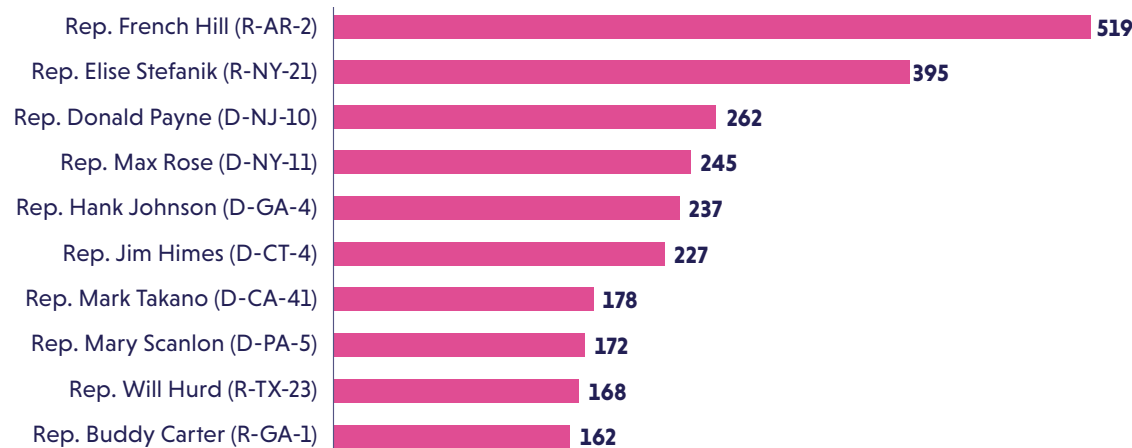
“Rural healthcare providers are absolutely critical to the health and wellbeing of NY-21. On this Rural Health Day, I am proud to honor the important work that our rural hospitals and healthcare providers do in service to our seniors, veterans, and greater communities. I was proud to introduce the Protecting Rural Access to Care Act and worked directly with CMS and HHS to protect our rural hospitals and provide them with critical funding, especially in response to COVID-19. I will continue to be a vocal advocate for these critical facilities.”



Representative
Elise Stefanik
@RepEliseStefanik



Most Active on Instagram

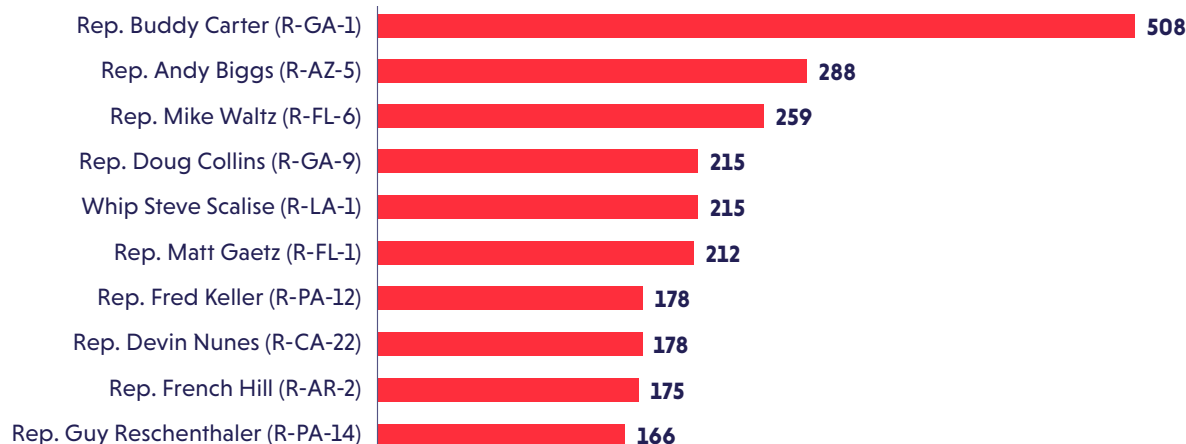


“I have really enjoyed leaning into Instagram and other non-traditional social media platforms to show Arkansans back home in pictures instead of the usual words how my work is having a positive impact on the state and the nation and how I can help them, too.”



Representative French Hill
@RepFrenchHill

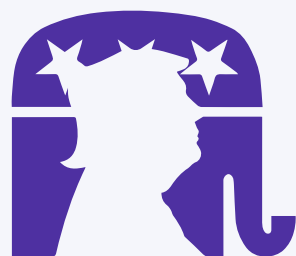
Most Active on YouTube



“YouTube is a very important tool that we use to reach constituents. When I do something like a one minute on the House floor to honor a member of the community or a TV interview talking about important news of the day, we upload the clip to YouTube. That way, even if a constituent misses the live speech or interview, it can easily be shared.”



Representative Buddy Carter
@RepBuddyCarter



Trump's Social Media in 2020

Posts Per Platform | Page 22

Posts Per Platform Over Time | Page 22

Trump's Top Hashtags | Page 23

Top Accounts Trump Retweets | Page 24

Top Accounts Trump Mentions | Page 24

In what can only be described as a chaotic 2020 for the executive branch, President Trump's tweet volume increased 46 percent compared to the same time period last year. Unlike Congress which saw its largest spike in tweets in March during the initial outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States, March was only President Trump's sixth-most active month on Twitter. Instead, he peaked in September and October as the election neared. There was then a sharp decline in November with the first month with under 1000 tweets since August 2019. With 14,314 tweets in 2020, President Trump averaged nearly 43 tweets per day, or 1.78 per hour. Five out of ten of Trump's most mentioned accounts are related to Fox News or Breitbart.

Number of Posts Per Platform



14,314
Twitter



7,329
Facebook



1,317
Instagram



4,759
YouTube

3:02 PM · Apr 15, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

“We are having very productive calls with the leaders of every sector of the economy who are all-in on getting America back to work, and soon. More to come! #MAGA”

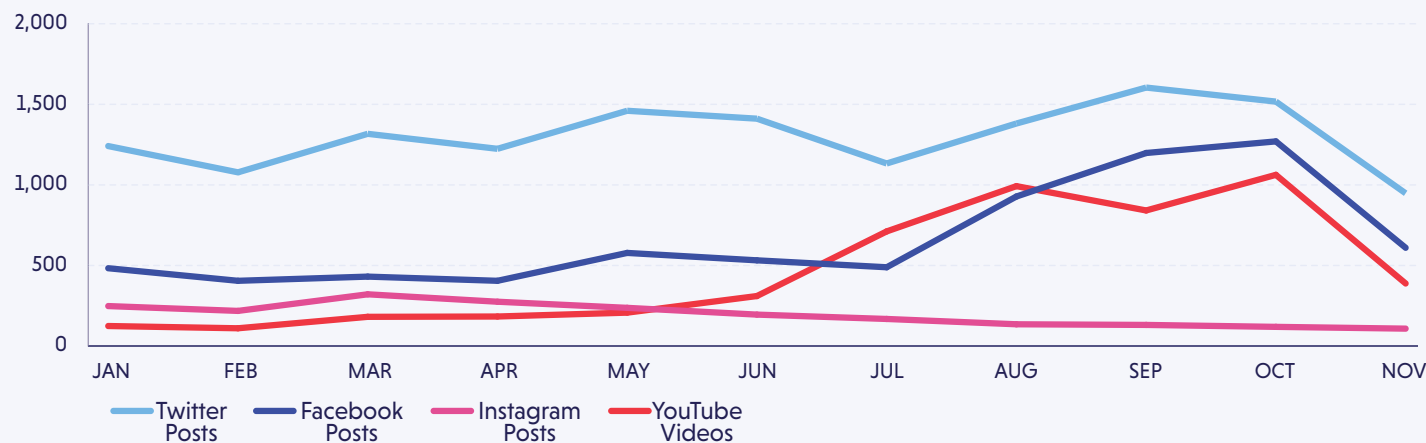


Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

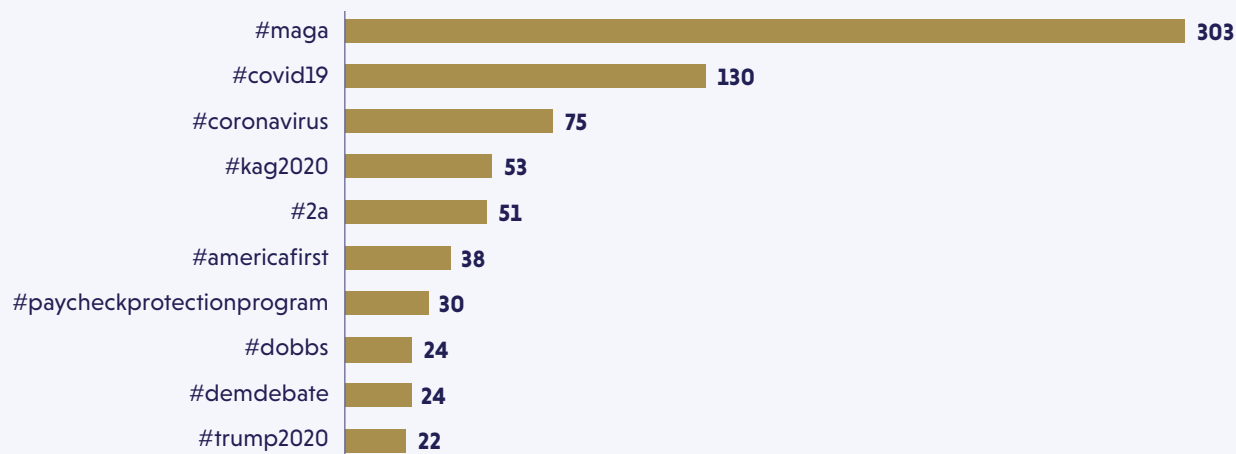


Number of Posts Per Platform Over Time

Trends in Social Media by Trump in 2020



Trump's Top Hashtags



7:05 AM · Jul 1, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

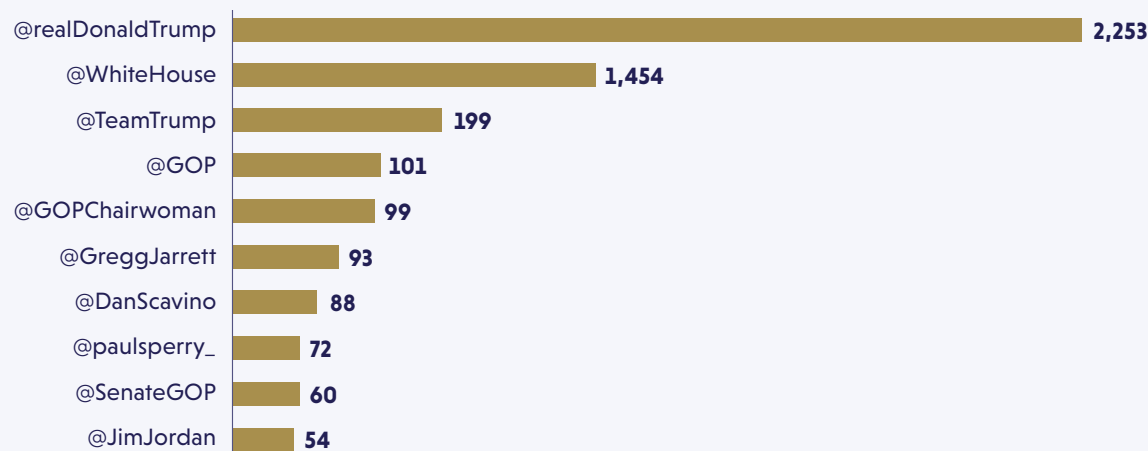
“Congratulations to @foxandfriends on completely dominating the just released morning TV Ratings. Morning Joke, starring Psycho Joe Scarborough on MSDNC, a Concast Company, was a disaster. Even worse was the barely registering @CNN Mess!”



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump



Top Accounts Trump Retweeted



11:54 AM · Jul 29, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

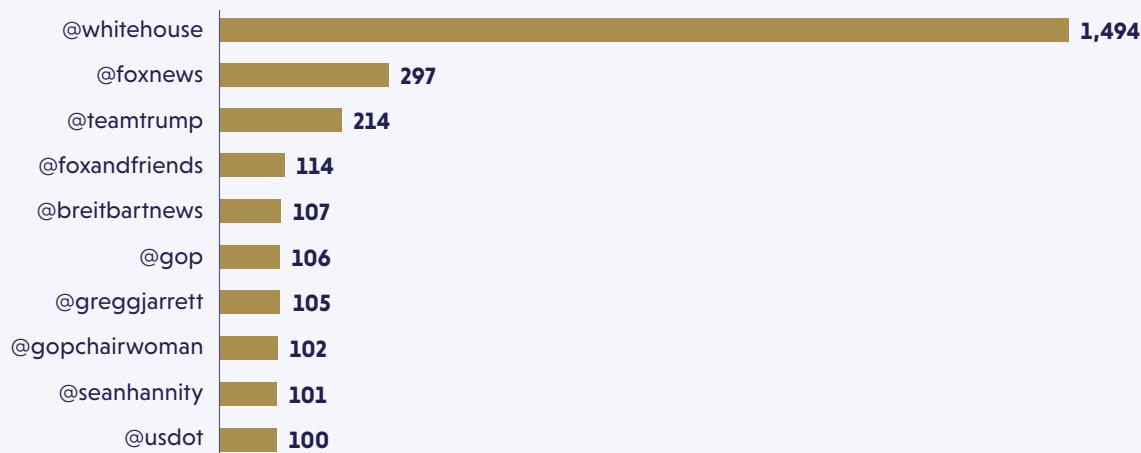
“I am designating \$18.9 million from @USDOT to MANY airports in Ohio, including @goingplacescle, @CAKairport, and several others, for improvements, updates, and safety. Great for the economy and the people of Ohio!”



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

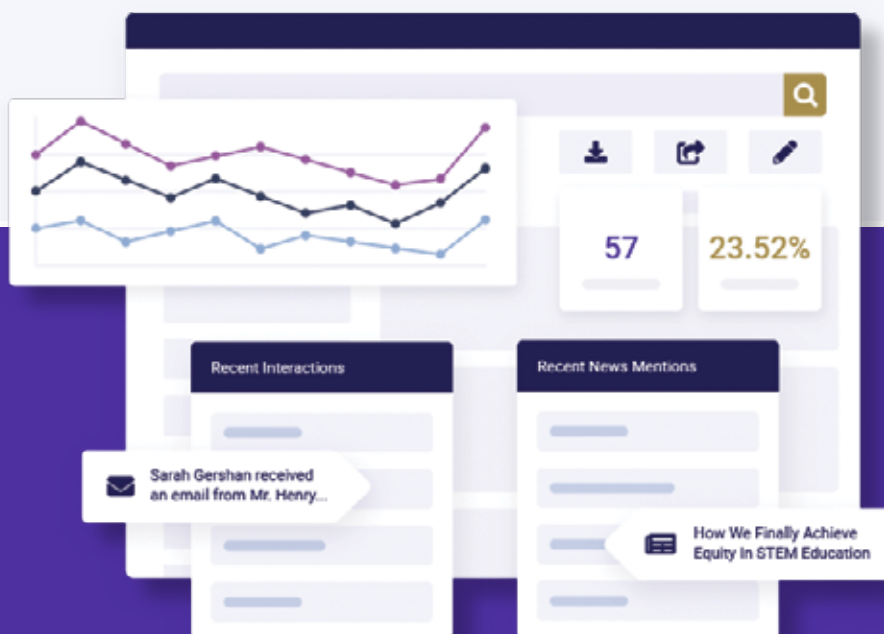


Top Accounts Trump Mentioned



The COVID Conversation Continues Online

COVID-19 appeared in Congress' social media on January 17th with Sen. Feinstein's call on HHS Secretary Alex Azar to begin preparing for an outbreak. Almost a year later, the dialogue on the pandemic isn't slowing down. Conversations that started with relief packages and testing strategies is transitioning to vaccines...and more relief packages. [Check out our auto-updating, interactive dashboard on COVID-19 dialogue from December 1st onward.](#)



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