

# [***Interview With Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJF-Y8S1-F072-X0KW-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

NEIL CAVUTO, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: All right, you know what happened in the House.

In an overwhelming vote that was bipartisan, the move was, TikTok cannot be what it is right now, controlled by China, and that means ByteDance, the parent company of China, must unload it, divest it, as they say on Wall Street.

But it isn`t getting the same reaction in the United States Senate. Again, Chuck Schumer has not even detailed if or even when the Senate will take it up.

Senator Mark Warner joins us right now. He is the Senate Intelligence Committee chairman.

Senator, good to have you.

Do you think the Senate should take up this issue?

SEN. MARK WARNER (D-VA): Absolutely.

Neil, I have been on your show many, many times talking about the national security threat that is posed by having a platform that 170 million Americans use on average 90 minutes a day. China is collecting this data about lots of Americans.

And what is even more problematic for me is, the genius of TikTok is, it knows what you like before you know what you like. And a lot of young people get all their news. They could switch the algorithm a little bit and suddenly all the TikTok videos will be promoting that Taiwan ought to be part of China, or that Putin`s right...

CAVUTO: Right.

WARNER: ... on getting Ukraine. And I think...

CAVUTO: No, all these examples you raised, you obviously eloquently put the key arguments here.

But it doesn`t look like Chuck Schumer either agrees or sees the need to do something right now.

WARNER: Well...

CAVUTO: Now, that could change. Is it your understanding that it will and the Senate will take up the matter?

WARNER: Well, listen, Neil, I know Senate never moves quickly on anything.

But my friends in the House, that was a huge vote, 352 votes. It was just yesterday. I think, Schumer, I have had preliminary conversations. Chair Cantwell on the Commerce Committee is going to have views. There may be things that need to be slightly altered or amended.

But I think anyone who cares about -- we have plenty of divisions in our country.

CAVUTO: Yes.

WARNER: We ought to be able to argue amongst ourselves, left and right, Republican, Democrat. We don`t need the Chinese Communist Party dominating or influencing.

(CROSSTALK)

CAVUTO: So, the sheer size of that vote, the sheer size of that vote in the House would maybe -- has maybe changed the thinking in the Senate, as far as you...

WARNER: I think so.

CAVUTO: OK.

WARNER: I would say so.

(CROSSTALK)

CAVUTO: So let me ask you about that then, Senator.

One other idea that`s been bandied about, if ByteDance were to go ahead and divest itself of TikTok, no sure thing, that TikTok would essentially be for sale one way or the other. A lot of American names have come into play here. Oracle`s name comes up, Microsoft, Meta, of course, the Facebook parent.

Do you have any concerns with any of those names?

WARNER: Well, I have concerns about too much concentration, if this was acquired by another social media company.

And, frankly, that`s all of our preference. If you like TikTok, if you`re a social influencer on that, you want to be, and you make your living that way, that`s great with me. It just ought to be a company that`s not controlled by China.

So I was really glad to see Donald Trump`s Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin put out word today that he was trying to put together a group of investors that could potentially buy this application. I think that he`d be great. He was one of the guys that first educated me on this issue.

And I know I have said this. I don`t say this often, even on FOX, but, on TikTok, Donald Trump was right years ago in saying it was a national security threat. Now, he`s changed his tune a little bit now.

CAVUTO: Yes.

WARNER: But his initial indication on this as a national security threat was right. And I think it would be great if a group of investors were to buy this.

So the service could still be extended. People could still get to see all the crazy and fun videos, but, ultimately, it would be with American or European or somebody other than Chinese ownership.

CAVUTO: You know, it doesn`t quite cut black and white, right, Senator? I mean, you mentioned Donald Trump changing his mind on this, that maybe we don`t get rid of it for the time being or push to get rid of it.

But it is a hot political issue, or could be, right? Because 170 million Americans use this.

WARNER: Yes.

CAVUTO: Lopsidedly, they`re young, and they don`t want it to go away.

WARNER: Well...

CAVUTO: And that they might get ticked off and take it out on politicians who do push to have it go away.

WARNER: I hear it. And that`s why I say, let`s not have it go away. Let`s just not have the Communist Party of China pulling its strings.

I think...

CAVUTO: But what do you -- how do you react when young people say, they don`t care, Senator?

WARNER: But...

CAVUTO: They figure that everyone spies on them when they`re online. It`s not forgivable, don`t get me wrong, but that they don`t draw the distinction China doing it versus an American company doing it, as you`re still being spied on.

How do you react to that? How do you talk to them?

WARNER: Well, I would react a couple of ways.

One, that funny or inappropriate video two, five years from now, if somebody`s trying to blackmail you from the Chinese spy services, I don`t think you`re going to want that to happen. And even if they don`t care about the propaganda purposes, we would never let the Chinese Communist Party buy FOX News or MSNBC.

The idea that they have this propaganda channel that can affect Americans` views, again, we got plenty to fight about amongst ourselves.

CAVUTO: Yes.

WARNER: Let`s not turn the reins over.

And one of the reasons that I think that something will happen is that we have done nothing on social media for years. I mean, the fact that we don`t even have any kids online safety, again, broad bipartisan support for that, if we can`t at least start with something that is this pervasive, controlled by an adversary of the United States, then all the things that folks think about Washington are true.

But I got a lot of hope; 352 people in the House, I didn`t think you would get 352 House members to agree on anything.

CAVUTO: No, you`re quite right about that. You`re quite right about it.

Let me ask you. You were mentioning the possibility how would we react to the Chinese where -- you first mentioned FOX News and MSNBC? Which would worry you more, if the Chinese bought FOX or they bought MSNBC?

WARNER: You know, I`m an equal opportunity abuser of the extremes.

CAVUTO: OK.

(LAUGHTER)

WARNER: And you`re not on one of the extremes.

But the extreme voices on either end of the political agenda scare the heck out of me.

CAVUTO: All right.

Let me ask you that about -- well, finally, I was mentioning Chuck Schumer before, Senator, but he did mention and surprised some people, urging that there be new elections in Israel, doesn`t like what he`s seen and heard out of Benjamin Netanyahu.

A lot of people interpreted that, even on your side of the aisle, that`s a bit intrusive and a bit much for a U.S. senator to call for elections in a sovereign country. Do you think he went too far?

WARNER: Oh, listen, I`m a lifelong supporter of Israel.

I am horribly concerned, because of some of the activities of the current Israeli government, that we could be losing a generation of Americans in terms of support for Israel. And Israel needs American support for its survival and for its success.

I`m not going to weigh in on who the Israelis should choose as their leader, but I would point out that Bibi Netanyahu was never shy about trying to interfere in American ***politics***, particularly when Barack Obama was president.

CAVUTO: So you don`t have a problem with what Chuck Schumer did?

WARNER: Listen, I`m not going to tell a foreign nation who their leader should be.

CAVUTO: OK.

WARNER: I do think, if the polls in Israel show that he would not get voted back in -- but I`m not going to do that.

But I would say that the way that Prime Minister Netanyahu dealt with Obama and, frankly, the way he`s dealt with Secretary Blinken, Israel`s strongest ally in the last couple of months, has not been with respect.

CAVUTO: All right, we will watch it very closely.

Senator Warner, very good seeing you again.

WARNER: Thanks, Neil.

CAVUTO: All right, Mark Warner.

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