

JOSH HAWLEY
MISSOURI

115 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
TELEPHONE: (202) 224-6154
FAX: (202) 228-0526
WWW.HAWLEY.SENATE.GOV

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

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September 13, 2022

Alfred F Kelly Jr.
Chief Executive Officer
Visa
900 Metro Center Blvd
Foster City, CA 94404

Michael Miebach
Chief Executive Officer
MasterCard
2000 Purchase Street
Purchase, NY 10577

Stephen Squeri
Chief Executive Officer
American Express, Inc.
200 Vesey Street
New York, New York 10285

Dear Mr. Kelly, Mr. Miebach, and Mr. Squeri:

I write to express serious concern with your decision to separately categorize gun-related purchases from other retail transactions made with your payment cards so that firearm purchases can be more easily tracked. This move has been described by multiple media outlets as “a major win for gun control advocates,” and they are not wrong.¹ This new system is ripe for abuse and brings to mind similar policies of Big Tech companies and payment processors that have targeted law-abiding Americans for engaging in constitutionally protected activities. I urge you to immediately reverse course.

Too often, companies have abused their market power to target the constitutional rights of conservatives and others with minority viewpoints. Big Tech companies systematically deplatformed those who sought to discuss the efficacy of masks and vaccines or raise concerns about the integrity of our elections. The crowdfunding platform GoFundMe blocked donations to the Canadian “Freedom Rally” trucker convoy.² And WePay, a payment processor subsidiary of JPMorgan Chase—the largest bank in the United States—refused to do business with Missouri conservatives seeking to host an event with Donald Trump, Jr.³ Your proposal to track firearm-related purchases further threatens Americans who are simply exercising their constitutional rights.

The Second Amendment is clear: the right of the people to keep and bear arms is guaranteed to law-abiding citizens and “shall not be infringed.” Whether this infringement is by the federal government or powerful corporations seeking to ostracize citizens for exercising their rights, I will oppose all attempts to undermine the Second Amendment’s protections.

Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and other payment card companies should not distinguish lawful firearm-related purchases from other retail purchases. Americans have had enough of massive companies using their market power to drive ordinary people out of the public square. These practices must end.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Josh Hawley
United States Senator

¹ <https://apnews.com/article/gun-violence-shootings-new-york-city-politics-4aae50c67e40f9683f604a8683acc391>.

² <https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2022/02/04/highway-robbery-gofundme-to-redirect-10m-canadian-trucker-fund-to-verified-charities/>.

³ <https://missouriindependent.com/2021/11/17/donald-trump-jr-event-canceled-after-chase-bank-ends-deal-with-missouri-conservative-group/>.