



## Separate Tech and State

Some libertarians dismiss concerns over social media companies' suppression of news and opinions that contradict select agendas by pointing out that these platforms are private companies, not part of the government. There are two problems with this argument. First, there is nothing unlibertarian about criticizing private businesses or using peaceful and voluntary means, such as boycotts, to persuade businesses to change their practices.



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The second and most significant reason the “they are private companies” argument does not hold water is the tech companies' censorship has often been done at the “request” of government officials. The extent of government involvement with online censorship was revealed in emails between government and employees of various tech companies. In these emails the government officials addressed employees of these “private companies” as though these employees were the government officials' subordinates.

Government officials using their authority to silence American citizens is a blatant violation of the First Amendment. Yet some conservative elected officials and writers think the solution to the problem of big tech censorship is giving government more power over technology companies. These pro-regulation conservatives ignore the fact that it would be just as unconstitutional if a conservative administration was telling tech companies who they must allow to access their platforms as it is when progressives order social media companies to deplatform certain individuals. Furthermore, since the average government official's political views are closer to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez than to Marjorie Taylor Greene, giving government more power over social media companies is likely to lead to more online censorship of conservatives.

Instead of giving government more power over social media, defenders of free speech should work to separate tech and state. An excellent place to start is pushing for passage of the Free Speech Protection Act. Unlike other legislation, such as the PATRIOT Act and the Affordable Care Act, this bill is accurately named. Introduced by Kentucky Senator Rand Paul and Ohio Representative Jim Jordan, this bill makes it a crime for any federal employee or employee of a federal contractor to use his position to communicate with a social media company to interfere with any American's exercise of First Amendment protected rights. Violators of this law would face fines of at least 10,000 dollars as well as suspension, demotion, or even termination and a lifetime ban from working with the federal government.

In addition to working to pass the Free Speech Protection Act, those who object to the big technology companies' “content moderation” policies should abandon big tech for more free speech friendly platforms. Many of the newer social media companies were started to meet the demand for a “content moderation”-free alternative to the dominant companies. Senator Paul himself stopped posting videos on YouTube because of its suppression of free speech. While my Liberty Report still airs on YouTube, its main platform is Rumble. It is wonderful to do a show on any topic I choose without worrying about



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being canceled.

Big tech censorship is a problem created by big government. The solution lies not with giving government more power but with separating tech and state. Passing the Free Speech Protection Act and making big tech pay a price for cooperating with big government by leaving to use sites like Rumble are two excellent places to start.



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