



## TikTok Hypocrisy

President Biden's campaign will continue using the popular social media site TikTok even though the president supported a provision in the military aid bill he recently signed forcing TikTok's parent company ByteDance to sell TikTok within 270 days. If ByteDance does not sell TikTok within the required time, TikTok will be banned in the USA. Biden's continued use of TikTok to reach the approximately 150 million American TikTok users, is not the only example of hypocrisy from politicians who support the TikTok ban.



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The TikTok ban was driven by claims that, because ByteDance is a Chinese company, TikTok is controlled by the Chinese government and, thus, is helping the Chinese government collect data on American citizens. However, the only tie ByteDance has to the Chinese government is via a Chinese government controlled company that owns a small amount of stock in a separate ByteDance operation. Furthermore, ByteDance stores its data in an American facility not accessible by the Chinese government.

Just days before passing the TikTok ban, the same Senate that is so concerned about TikTok's alleged violations of Americans' privacy passed the FISA reauthorization bill. This bill not only extended existing authorities for warrantless wiretapping and surveillance, it made it easier for government agencies to spy on American citizens. It did this by requiring anyone with access to a targeted individual's electronic device to cooperate with intelligence agencies.

Supporters of banning TikTok also cited concerns over the site's "content moderation" policies. These policies reportedly forbid postings embarrassing to the Chinese government such as some related to the 1989 Tiananmen Square confrontation or the Free Tibet movement.

TikTok, like most social media platforms, engages in content moderation. The TikTok ban was supported by Democrats, including President Biden, who have a history of "encouraging" social media companies to censor Americans from using social media to spread "fake news."

Fake news is defined as anything that contradicts the Democrat or "woke" agenda, including the truth about covid origins, dangers, and treatments; whether democracy was really threatened on January 6; and the full story of Hunter Biden's business dealings.

One major reason behind strong bipartisan support for the TikTok ban is the wish to engage in a cold war with China. ByteDance's Chinese connection makes it a convenient target to help foster anti-Chinese sentiment. Sadly, the anti-Chinese hysteria is a bipartisan phenomenon and has even infected some politicians who take sensible positions on US intervention in Ukraine.

Another major reason banning TikTok has strong bipartisan support is that the site is being used by many young people to share information on the Israeli government's action in Gaza. The head of the Anti-Defamation League was actually caught on tape complaining about the "TikTok problem." This use



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of TikTok made TikTok a target for the many politicians who think the First Amendment makes an exception for speech critical of Israel.

The silver lining in the TikTok ban is it is waking up more Americans, especially young Americans, to the threat the out-of-control welfare-warfare-surveillance state poses to their liberty and prosperity. This provides a great opportunity to spread the ideas of liberty and grow the liberty movement.

*Ron Paul is a former U.S. congressman from Texas. This [article](#) originally appeared at the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity and is reprinted here with permission.*



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