



Written by [James Murphy](#) on September 29, 2021

John Stossel Sues Facebook and “Fact Checker” Climate Feedback for Defamation

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Long-time American consumer reporter John Stossel has announced that he is suing tech giant Facebook and an associated “fact checker,” Climate Feedback, for defamation in regard to two of Stossel’s videos that question the mainstream narrative on so-called climate change.



Gage Skidmore/flickr.com

Stossel announced the [lawsuit](#) in a tweet:

“I hate lawsuits,” Stossel wrote. “I sued because they LIED in multiple careless ‘fact-checks’, throttled my channel, and because they frequently smear others too.”

“It needs to stop,” Stossel stressed.

Facebook and its designated censor Climate Feedback originally [censored](#) Stossel back in June over two videos that he shared regarding climate change. Those videos were:

[“Are We Doomed,”](#) an overview of the climate-alarmist movement, which features Dr. David Legates, the former director of Climatic Research at the University of Delaware; Dr. Patrick Michaels, a former president of the American Association of State Climatologists; and Dr. Willie Soon, an astrophysicist from Harvard; and

[“Government Fueled Fires,”](#) a video acknowledging that climate change is a factor in the wildfires in the Western United States but suggests that government forest mismanagement is a more serious problem.

For “Are We Doomed,” Facebook alleged that Stossel’s video and the three scientists featured in it were peddling “partially false information,” although they didn’t specify exactly what was false or even “partially false.”

For “Government Fueled Fires,” Facebook labeled the video thus: “Missing Context. Independent fact-checkers say this information could mislead people.” A further explanation told readers: “Claim — ‘forest fires are caused by poor management. Not by climate change.’ Verdict: misleading.”

Stossel is seeking to have any “fact check” labels removed from his posts and have any removed content reinstated. In addition, he is seeking compensatory damages “in an amount according to proof at trial but estimated to exceed \$1,000,000.00” and punitive damages of no less than \$1,000,000.00.

Stossel also claims that Facebook and Climate Feedback purposefully misquoted him regarding the video about wildfires.



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“Climate Feedback got Facebook to censor this as ‘misleading’ and link to a page that still declares the following quote misleading: ‘Forest fires are caused by poor management. Not by climate change.’” Stossel wrote.

“As if that were something I said. But I didn’t! I never said that,” Stossel stressed.

In addition, with regard to the “Are We Doomed” video, Stossel actually interviewed one of the Climate Feedback scientists who, more or less, agreed with Stossel that the video should not have been censored.

Speaking about a claim in the video made by Legates that hurricanes were not any stronger or more frequent, Dr. Patrick Brown of Climate Feedback said, ““That’s wrong that you were criticized for saying that.... The IPCC (doesn’t) claim that (hurricanes) ... are increasing.”

Later, Brown told Stossel that the facts in the video weren’t the problem but an “omission of contextual information, rather than specific ‘facts’ being ‘wrong.’”

A Facebook spokesperson denied Stossel’s claims. “We believe this case is without merit and we will defend ourselves vigorously against the allegations.”

Unfortunately, Stossel may be facing an uphill battle against the social-media giant if a Delaware case brought by conservative commentator Candace Owens is any indication. Owens sued Facebook and its fact-checkers Lead Stories and *USA Today* after they throttled a post claiming that the U.S. government was overstating both the scope and the danger of the COVID-19 pandemic. Facebook labeled Owen’s post as “false.” The post also carried the stigma of a “hoax alert.”

But the Delaware court ultimately [ruled](#) that Owens and her attorneys could not show that the word “false” was an “untrue statement under the reasonable conceivability standard,” whatever that means. In addition, the court saw the term “hoax alert” as “loose, figurative” language.

Apparently, in Facebook’s world, facts are things that can be interpreted any number of ways and lies are things that must be observably false under a “reasonable conceivability standard.” But if that’s their opinion, why does the tech giant hide behind so-called fact-checkers?

Hiding behind fact-checkers gives Facebook the illusion of political neutrality in a highly charged political atmosphere such as the world we currently find ourselves in. If the tech giant was, in any way, honest, it would just say, “We’re a private company and we censor things that we don’t agree with.”



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