



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 7, 2020

## Sen. Cotton to Google: Explain Election Interference, Conservative Blacklist in Search Results

Senator Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) is pushing Google to explain why it manipulates search results to exclude news and opinion from conservative websites, particularly those that oppose or criticize presumptive Democrat nominee Joe Biden.



In a letter of July 31 to Google chieftain [Sundar Pichai](#), the Arkansas Republican strongly suggested that Google was attempting to help elect Biden. Cotton cited not only Google's blocking anti-Biden search results, but also the behavior of employees in the aftermath of the 2016 election, which sent Google execs and employees into hysterics.

Cotton sent Pichai the letter a week after he asked U.S. Attorney General William Barr to investigate Google for violations of federal antitrust law.

### **Pichai Letter**

Citing his letter of July 23 to Barr, [Cotton warned Pichai](#) "new reporting" had intensified his concerns that Google was trying to swing the election for Biden.

"Especially given the proximity to the November 2020 presidential election, the fact that Google appears to be delisting search results critical of former Vice President Joe Biden is particularly disturbing."

Most Americans assume that Google shows them the most relevant results when they search the web, rather than curated results designed to support a corporation's preferred political party. I am concerned that Google's actions are playing a role in misleading the American people in the run-up to Election Day.

Cotton then went back to what Google's army of leftist employees thought was an epochal disaster: President Trump's defeat of Hillary Clinton.

"According to leaked video from Google's first all-hands meeting following the 2016 election," [Cotton wrote](#), "one top Google executive told employees that they must 'work so hard' to ensure that the populist movement that helped to propel President Trump to the White House was nothing more than a 'blip' in history."

Google dismissed the video when it leaked, Cotton wrote, and the company said it takes "extraordinary care to be a trustworthy source of information for everyone, without regard to political viewpoint" — a laughable claim.

[Continued Cotton:](#)



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Despite Google's previous denials of bias, it was reported this week that Google may be manipulating its search engine operations to block content appearing when users search for "Joe Biden." A Breitbart News article presented compelling evidence indicating that, in early May, Google manipulated its algorithm to cause the "wholesale removal of rank and visibility" of Breitbart results mentioning Vice President Biden. In fact, after Google's algorithm change, the amount of Google-based impressions and clicks on Breitbart News articles for Biden-related terms stopped completely. A search engine optimization expert opined that the evidence suggested a "high probab[ility] [of] manipulation on the part of Google." Indeed, according to the article, the expert also said he had never seen anything like it. While most news websites derive 30%-50% of their online traffic from Google search results, for Breitbart News that number is only 9%.

In other words, Google deep-sixed Breitbart's results. On July 28 in the piece Cotton cited, the [news site reported](#) that "data shows that Google has suppressed Breitbart's search visibility by 99.7 percent since 2016, and that "organic Google search traffic to Breitbart (measured by unique visitors) is down 63 percent when comparing the first half of 2016 with the first half of 2020."

[Cotton also asked](#) Pichai about his claim to Congress in December 2018 that "it's not possible for an individual employee or groups of employees to manipulate search results," which doesn't square with the disappearance of Breitbart's search results.

Cotton asked Pichai to provide detailed answers about its algorithm changes to block Biden-related material on Breitbart and whether the leftist outfit is filtering conservative views.

"Given your testimony in December 2018 that it is impossible for Google to manipulate search results to benefit one political party over another," Cotton asked, "do you believe it is mere accident that Google's algorithm apparently disadvantages only conservative perspectives in search results in the United States?"

### **Letter to Barr**

Before Cotton wrote to Pichai, [he asked](#) Barr to examine the company's business practices vis-à-vis antitrust law and whether Google is using its near monopoly on search results to manipulate American politics.

Noting that Google controls 90 percent of Internet searches, Cotton wrote that "Google has a monopoly of internet searches by any objective standard."

"While monopolistic behavior alone should warrant Department action, it's even more alarming that reports suggest Google is using that monopoly to achieve political goals and influence American elections," [Cotton wrote](#):

In December 2018, Google CEO Sundar Pichai testified before Congress that Google did not "manually intervene" on any search results. A source from Google, however, later reported to a news outlet that YouTube (owned by Google) manipulated search results related to abortion after a left-wing journalist complained about the prominence of pro-life videos on YouTube. After the journalist's inquiry, the search results were manipulated to feature more content supporting abortion from left-wing media.

Google also blacklists conservative media, he wrote.

Because of its monopoly on search results, which can affect voter preferences, "the consequences of Google suppressing conservative views is particularly pernicious."



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H/T: [Breitbart](#)

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*R. Cort Kirkwood is a long-time contributor to The New American and a former newspaper editor.*



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