



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on November 23, 2023

Democrats Threaten to Leave X but Realize They Have Nowhere to Go

Democrats may not like Elon Musk's X. But they can't pry themselves away.

In just one example of liberals' reluctant dependence on the platform, Representatives. Dan Goldman (R-N.Y.) and Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) on Tuesday sent a [letter](#) to X that was co-signed by 25 other Democratic members of the House of Representatives.

"We write to express our grave concern surrounding X's ongoing failure to abide by its own policies governing the promotion of misinformation and hateful, violent, and terroristic propaganda videos, which shockingly have been used by the company for profit," the lawmakers wrote.

Ironically, they went on to share news of their letter on X itself.

"As much as we'd personally like to not have to engage with a platform that boosts this kind of s[**]t, we do have an obligation to speak to constituents on Twitter, and it's still a very effective way to reach them," a Goldman spokesperson told [Politico](#).

Moreover, Goldman's office said the congressman's office has ceased all advertising on X since the October 7 attack on Israel by Hamas. Major companies such as Disney, IBM, and Apple have also pulled their advertising dollars from the platform.

The incident highlights the mixed feelings Democrats have about the social media platform formerly known as Twitter. Although they disagree with what they believe are owner Elon Musk's right-leaning politics and are outraged that the censorship of conservative voices is not as pronounced as it was prior to Musk's leadership, Democrats nevertheless find themselves forced to stay amid the lack of a viable alternative that both has X's features and allows them its reach.

Andrew Bleeker, president of the pro-Democrat communications firm Bully Pulpit Interactive, described the situation in the following terms: "The press still lives and dies on Twitter, and as long as they're there, it's going to be hard for elected officials to avoid it."

X has the advantage of having been the pioneer in its particular niche — public microblogging in a way that facilitates and encourages discussion about news events, rather than the more personal slant of MySpace and Facebook.

Having captured the market early on and built a massive user base, it is now difficult for new platforms without the users and name recognition to break through. Twitter alternatives on both sides of the ideological spectrum, from Trump's Truth Social to Facebook's Threads, have discovered the challenge from first-hand experience.



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Arguably the most successful alternative to Twitter has been Gab, which functionally is very similar to Twitter. Gab markets itself as a free speech platform but has restrictions on certain types of content in alignment with founder-owner Andrew Torba's Christian worldview, such as a prohibition on pornography. The Gab user base is estimated to be 5 million total with about 100,000 active users.

In Gab's case, the platform was able to successfully carve out a niche for dissident right-wing voices during a time of massive censorship across Twitter, Facebook, and other mainstream social media companies. While the relaxed rules on X following its acquisition by Musk have caused Gab to lose some appeal among less-conservative users, the site is nevertheless able to continue thriving due to its dedicated right-wing core support.

Naturally, however, Democrats are not going to transfer over to a site that has even more of the voices they desperately wish weren't allowed on X. Yet they are also hesitant to abandon a platform where they can reach the public at large without merely talking in an echo chamber.

Despite the lack of viable options, Democrats are continuing to make the threat of jumping ship if they do not get their way.

As Politico reports:

Raskin told POLITICO he could see a day he leaves the platform, saying he believes there "could be a breaking point if nothing changes." And he said it'd send a more powerful message if there was a mass lawmaker exodus. "I would definitely reassess with my colleagues — this has more significance if a lot of people agree to do it together."

Similarly, Kanter said if Musk doesn't address their concerns, "we'll absolutely consider voting with our feet and getting out."

Some Democrats have begun building up followers on Threads as a way of hedging their bets in the event of a mass Democratic exodus from X. Among them are Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

"With President Biden joining Threads, I assume Threads will continue to grow and be used more," said Crystal Patterson, the former head of Facebook's global civic partnerships and an operative for several Democratic presidential campaigns. Patterson called Threads "the most obvious viable alternative right now."

The destinies of these platforms remains uncertain. The presence of big names on a social media site can potentially pull users to it. At the same time, average users don't want to just follow Democrat politicians; what makes a social media site engaging is the discussion aspect — being able to interact with other users who are just regular people.

This is partly why Gab has achieved moderate success — not many big-name right-wing influencers use it regularly, but there is a large base of regular people on there having discussions with each other.

Therefore, any attempted Democrat exodus from X that is not also accompanied by a mass user exodus is unlikely to get very far.



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