



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on May 29, 2020

Trump Cuts Aid to Big Tech, Citing Bias and Censorship

President Donald Trump issued an executive order on May 28 targeting Big Tech companies for discriminating against conservatives and Christians, vowing to end federal support as well as liability protections for the Deep State-controlled firms if they continue silencing viewpoints their bosses disagree with. The U.S. president, whose supporters have long been targets of the Silicon Valley elite, blasted the social-media giants for their discrimination and also threatened that federal legislation might be coming soon to help rein in the attacks on free speech. There are even potential national-security concerns at stake, the president suggested.



Trump's new policy, known simply as "[Executive Order on Preventing Online Censorship](#)," does not impose any new restrictions or mandates on the companies in question. Instead, it targets federal benefits that have long been offered to the giant Deep State companies, many of which were launched with crucial help from U.S. taxpayer funds and other federal assistance. In particular, the order calls on various federal agencies and departments to revisit the broad protections offered for social-media and other tech firms under section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA) exempting them from liability if they act as neutral platforms.

"It is the policy of the United States that the scope of that immunity should be clarified: the immunity should not extend beyond its text and purpose to provide protection for those who purport to provide users a forum for free and open speech, but in reality use their power over a vital means of communication to engage in deceptive or pretextual actions stifling free and open debate by censoring certain viewpoints," Trump's order said. Among other concerns, the president explained that the statute was designed to address court rulings establishing that if an online platform restricted some content, it should be treated as a publisher, making it liable for the content posted there. In short, the measure was supposed to help foster a "forum for a true diversity of political discourse."

But that is not what happened. As virtually everybody knows now, the companies dropped everything but the pretense of neutrality many years ago. That process accelerated amid and after the 2016 election, with [multiple individuals and organizations, such as Alex Jones' Infowars, being completely deplatformed](#). Instead of neutrality, Trump said the Big Tech firms were engaged in "inappropriate political activism" and were seeking to rig the upcoming election in favor of Democrats. It would not be the first time the Deep State-controlled firms would try to tip the electoral scales, as top experts in the field such as Dr. Robert Epstein and multiple whistleblowers have pointed out over the years.

The new White House measure begins by pointing out that freedom of speech is a "bedrock" principle underpinning American self-government. "Our Founding Fathers protected this sacred right with the First Amendment to the Constitution," explained the president in the text of the order, an action that



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victims of Big Tech had been asking the president to take since at least 2018. “The freedom to express and debate ideas is the foundation for all of our rights as a free people.”

The order cites court cases establishing that these tech companies, which long deceived consumers into believing they were neutral platforms, have now become the modern equivalent of the public square. And that dominance, the president argued, was partly a result of the firms deceiving users into believing they were neutral venues for Americans to communicate and express themselves, rather than left-wing activists seeking to manipulate and control what Americans could see and say.

“Section 230 was not intended to allow a handful of companies to grow into titans controlling vital avenues for our national discourse under the guise of promoting open forums for debate, and then to provide those behemoths blanket immunity when they use their power to censor content and silence viewpoints that they dislike,” Trump declared in his executive decree. “When an interactive computer service provider removes or restricts access to content and its actions do not meet the criteria of subparagraph (c)(2)(A), it is engaged in editorial conduct.”

Trump also explained the importance of all this to America and self-government. “In a country that has long cherished the freedom of expression, we cannot allow a limited number of online platforms to hand pick the speech that Americans may access and convey on the internet,” the president’s order continues. “This practice is fundamentally un-American and anti-democratic. When large, powerful social media companies censor opinions with which they disagree, they exercise a dangerous power. They cease functioning as passive bulletin boards, and ought to be viewed and treated as content creators.”

The executive decree calls on the federal government to quit using tax money to support companies that censor free speech, including through the purchasing of ads. It orders the heads of various agencies to review their spending on social-media sites, and to consider the statutory authorities available to them to stop spending the American people’s hard-earned money propping up companies that seek to silence a significant segment of those taxpayers while manipulating the entire population. The Department of Justice is instructed to review the viewpoint discrimination imposed by the companies to assess whether these companies are problematic in terms of communicating with the public.

The order also directs the U.S. Attorney General to establish a working group that would examine the potential enforcement of state statutes prohibiting online platforms from using unfair practices or deception. In short, if the companies lied to consumers, or misled them, they may be in violation of statutes prohibiting such deception. Another task for the group would be to consider possible model legislation that could be considered by state legislatures where there are no state laws protecting consumers from such abuses. State attorneys general will be invited to participate in the discussion and consultation, according to the order.

One task for the working group will be to examine algorithms that are used to suppress content or users based on their perceived political views, and whether users are prohibited from earning money on those platforms based on their viewpoints. Another will be to collect information on whether the firms are subjecting users to increased scrutiny based on whom they may follow on the platforms. And the group is supposed to gather facts concerning the reliance of these firms on biased third parties to review content. This is something that conservatives subjected to smears by anti-Christian hate groups such as the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) are only too familiar with.



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Interestingly, considering recent revelations about the Big Tech firms' cozy relations with the mass-murdering regime in China, the working group is also tasked with gathering information on whether accounts associated with the Communist Chinese Party are benefiting from differential policies that enable Beijing and other regimes to do what Americans are not allowed to do. Depending on what is found, this could have massive potential national-security implications. Indeed, YouTube and Google were recently accused of automatically censoring anti-communist comments in Chinese, something that multiple U.S. lawmakers have expressed outrage about. The company blamed an unspecified "error."

"At the same time online platforms are invoking inconsistent, irrational, and groundless justifications to censor or otherwise restrict Americans' speech here at home, several online platforms are profiting from and promoting the aggression and disinformation spread by foreign governments like China," Trump said, adding that some have even peddled paid Communist Chinese propaganda enabling barbarous human rights abuses such as the mass internment of Muslims. "One United States company, for example, created a search engine for the Chinese Communist Party that would have blacklisted searches for 'human rights,' hid data unfavorable to the Chinese Communist Party, and tracked users determined appropriate for surveillance. It also established research partnerships in China that provide direct benefits to the Chinese military."

The abuses against Americans are an enormous problem, the order suggests. A year ago, Trump said in the measure, the White House launched a "Tech Bias Reporting tool" that allowed Americans to report incidents of online censorship by the Big Tech firms. In a matter of weeks, more than 16,000 official complaints were filed accusing the companies of censoring or restricting users based on their political viewpoints. Those complaints will be submitted to the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Those agencies will be tasked with reviewing whether the Big Tech firms have used "deceptive practices," which are illegal, to dupe users into using their services by pretending to be neutral.

Also key will be legislation, Trump said. In the U.S. Senate, more than a few Republicans and even some Democrats, including presumed presidential nominee Joe Biden, have taken aim at the broad protections for Big Tech giants under the CDA. U.S. Senator Josh Hawley, a Republican from Missouri, even promised on Twitter that he would "introduce legislation to end these special government giveaways" to social-media companies that act as an unfair subsidy and were designed to protect neutral platforms from liability, not publishers pushing a political agenda. Trump's order calls on Attorney General William Barr to develop a proposal for federal legislation, too. Barr suggested a lawsuit was being planned as well.

The day before signing the order, [Trump dropped a major hint](#) that it was coming on Twitter, putting it in the context of election meddling and efforts to censor GOP officials while boosting Democrats.

"Republicans feel that Social Media Platforms totally silence conservatives voices," the president said. "We will strongly regulate, or close them down, before we can ever allow this to happen. We saw what they attempted to do, and failed, in 2016. We can't let a more sophisticated version of that happen again." In particular, Trump's order noted that Representative Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) was still peddling the debunked "Russia collusion" conspiracy on social-media even recently, while Republicans are targeted even for speaking the truth.

Indeed, Trump's order came shortly after a high-profile spat with Twitter. The controversial company allowed Chief of Site Integrity Yoel Roth, a radical anti-Trump activist who has openly expressed his hatred and contempt for Trump supporters, to put out a "fact check" purporting to discredit one of



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Trump's tweets. "Twitter is now interfering in the 2020 Presidential Election," the president said about the incident. "They are saying my statement on Mail-In Ballots, which will lead to massive corruption and fraud, is incorrect, based on fact-checking by Fake News CNN and the Amazon Washington Post. Twitter is completely stifling FREE SPEECH, and I, as President, will not allow it to happen!"

Indeed, this is hardly a new phenomenon. According to top experts in the field such as Dr. Robert Epstein, himself a supporter of Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign, Google dishonestly managed to shift millions of undecided voters toward Clinton through rigged algorithms that were imperceptible to users — almost all of whom were deceived into believing the search-engine was a neutral arbiter. Leaked videos and Project Veritas interviews [with insiders and whistleblowers at Big Tech firms](#) also [offered additional proof](#) that the companies were brazenly rigging their platforms against conservatives while tricking users into believing they were neutral. Such practices have been described as "fraud" by more than a few critics.

But there is even more to the story. According to longtime D.C. insider Mike Lofgren, broadly credited with popularizing the term "Deep State" in American political discourse, [Silicon Valley is a crucial part of the Deep State](#), alongside the security agencies, the Treasury, Wall Street, and the secret courts. As numerous media outlets have documented, the so-called intelligence community, including the CIA and the NSA, sometimes through their investment arm known as "In-Q-Tel," played a key role creating many of the companies. Also crucial was the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which helped Google early on.

Naturally, the beneficiaries of social-media efforts to silence conservatives, Republicans, Christians, and others expressed outrage about Trump's efforts to rein in federal benefits for the Big Tech titans. "The proliferation of disinformation is extremely dangerous, particularly as our nation faces the deadliest pandemic in history," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a statement blasting the executive order. "Clearly and sadly, the President's Executive Order is a desperate distraction from his failure to provide a national testing strategy to defeat COVID-19." Establishment Beltway "think tanks" taking in large contributions from Big Tech were also critical, falsely suggesting that ending unfair federal benefits to Big Tech was tantamount to attacking free speech.

In an upcoming report, this writer will detail some of the outrageous efforts by Big Tech companies including YouTube, Facebook, and Google to silence *The New American* magazine. This has ranged from shadow banning and slapping obviously phony "fact checks" on content to rigged algorithms making TNA content invisible or even outright deleting it forever. While private companies in a free society have a right to prevent people from using their services for any reason, they do *not* have a right to special protections or taxpayer money. Neither do they have a right to deceive users into believing they are neutral platforms when they are not. Nor do they have a right to trick naive consumers into surrendering their personal data.

It is past time for the federal government to quit funding, boosting, and protecting rogue economic actors that are hostile to America's most important and fundamental principles, including privacy and freedom of speech. President Trump's order is a step in the right direction. However, over the long term, once the feds quit rigging the marketplace in favor of the Big Tech giants, it will be crucial that the free market provide alternatives to the anti-American giants of Silicon Valley. The sooner that happens, the better.

Photo: AP Images



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Alex Newman is a correspondent for The New American. He can be reached at anewman@thenewamerican.com or through [Liberty Sentinel Media](#). Follow him on Twitter [@ALEXNEWMAN_JOU](#) or on [Facebook](#).

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