

TESTIMONY OF
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for the
UNITED STATES SENATE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION
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The NGO Element in the Censorship-Industrial Complex

For our Constitutionally protected freedom of speech to mean anything beyond the theoretical, we must actively practice it. President John F. Kennedy said the American people must be entrusted to confront “unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people.”

Unfortunately, the right to free speech has been under worse attack in the last decade than at any other point in our nation’s history.

The tentacles of the Censorship-Industrial Complex are choking out freedom of expression, important debates, and the right to criticize powerful institutions such as corporate media and the government.

Federal and state governments fund and promote censorship and blacklisting technology. They direct Big Tech companies to censor American speech and debate.

Academic institutions, such as Stanford University and the University of Texas are given large grants not to fight restrictions on speech but to conduct research on so-called “disinformation” for use by the censorship complex.

Non-profit think tanks such as the Aspen Institute push faulty research to government and media. They host so-called disinformation seminars to groom journalists to publish pro-censorship propaganda and to suppress stories, such as the Hunter Biden laptop bombshell.

Non-profit censorship groups such as the Global Disinformation Index and for-profit censorship businesses such as NewsGuard produce widely used censorship tools and blacklists to favor left-wing media while working to silence media that fight false narratives.

Attacking free speech and debate has become a massive industry, much of it government-funded, and all of it threatening a free and open society.

My publication, The Federalist, and I have been targets of the Censorship-Industrial Complex.

In June of 2020, a foreign group with the Orwellian name The Center For Countering Digital Hate engineered an operation to demonetize us because we published a critique of corporate media coverage of Black Lives Matter riots.^[1] The massive BLM protests

were the most expensive of any civil disorder in U.S. history, at \$2 billion or more in insurance claims.^[2] Many in the media falsely described the arson, looting, and killings as peaceful or “mostly peaceful.”

In April 2023, the House Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government released a report documenting how Stanford University colluded with two governmental entities to pressure social media companies into censoring true information, jokes, satire, political opinions, reporting, and analysis, all of which they claimed was “disinformation.” One post flagged for deletion was Sen. Thom Tillis thanking his supporters for propelling him to victory, which was deemed inappropriately “premature.”

My colleague Sean Davis and I were victims of this censorship scheme, as was The Federalist. One of the censored items was a story about a TV appearance in which I said of the media, “They lie, they lie, they lie, and then they lie.”

Gallup reported in February that my view is held by 70 percent of Americans, who say they don’t trust the media to report news accurately, fairly, or fully.^[3]

The blacklists and censorship tools, such as those provided by NewsGuard and the Global Disinformation Index, routinely rate leftwing news organizations, that are no threat to the permanent bureaucracy, higher than those that challenge prevailing orthodoxies. Companies use their lists to boycott some publications and reward others with advertising.

The *Washington Post* and *New York Times* routinely receive the highest marks. Those publications won Pulitzers for their role in the Russia collusion hoax, and we have some participants in that hoax here on this subcommittee.

My publication, The Federalist, exposed that hoax through dogged reporting and investigation, as we did with the media’s vicious lies against Justice Brett Kavanaugh. We exposed much of the Censorship-Industrial Complex, too, even suing the State Department after discovering its role in promoting and marketing censorship tools that are being used against us even as we sit here today.

Facing this censorship has been difficult. It would have been easy to fold. But that’s exactly what censors want: to make it impossible to report the truth about their lies. They know our voice is so powerful and influential that they can’t accomplish their goals unless they shut us down. They will not succeed. We will never stop. The more they try to shut us down, the harder we’re going to work to stay open, because it’s not about us – it’s about whether we will have a civilization where people are allowed to say and think things tyrants don’t want us to say.

^[1] <https://thefederalist.com/2020/06/03/the-media-are-lying-to-you-about-everything-including-the-riots/>

^[2] <https://www.axios.com/2020/09/16/riots-cost-property-damage>

^[3] <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/657239/five-key-insights-americans-views-news-media.aspx>