

**Written Statement  
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**“The Censorship Industrial Complex”**

**Subcommittee on the Constitution  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate**

**Dirksen Senate Office Building  
2:00 p.m.**

**March 25, 2025**

Chairman Schmitt, ranking member Welch, members of the Subcommittee, my name is Jonathan Turley. I am a law professor at George Washington University, where I hold the J.B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Chair of Public Interest Law.<sup>1</sup> It is an honor to appear before you today to discuss free speech and government censorship.

For the purposes of background, I come to this subject as someone who has written,<sup>2</sup> litigated,<sup>3</sup> and testified<sup>4</sup> in the area of the First Amendment for decades. This

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<sup>1</sup> I appear today on my own behalf, and my views do not reflect those of my law school or the media organizations that feature my legal analysis.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to a blog with a focus on First Amendment issues ([www.jonathanturley.org](http://www.jonathanturley.org)), I have written on First Amendment issues as an academic for decades. *See, e.g.*, Jonathan Turley, *INDISPENSABLE RIGHT: FREE SPEECH IN THE AGE OF RAGE* (Simon & Schuster 2025); Jonathan Turley, *Rage Rhetoric and the Revival of American Sedition*, 65 *William & Mary Law Review* 1409-1506 (2024); Jonathan Turley, *The Unfinished Masterpiece: Speech Compulsion and the Evolving Jurisprudence of Religious Speech* 82 *MD L. REV.* 145-189 (2023); Jonathan Turley, *The Right to Rage in American Political Discourse*, *GEO. J.L. & PUB. POL'Y* 481-525 (2023); Jonathan Turley, *Harm and Hegemony: The Decline of Free Speech in the United States*, 45 *HARV. J.L. & PUB. POL'Y* 571 (2022); Jonathan Turley, *The Loadstone Rock: The Role of Harm in The Criminalization of Plural Unions*, 64 *EMORY L.J.* 1905 (2015); Jonathan Turley, *Registering Publicus: The Supreme Court and Right to Anonymity*, 2002 *SUP. CT. REV.* 57-83.

<sup>3</sup> *See, e.g.*, Eugene Volokh, *The Sister Wives Case and the Criminal Prosecution of Polygamy*, *WASH. POST*, Aug. 28, 2015 (discussing challenge on religious, speech, and associational rights); Jonathan Turley, *Thanks to the Sister Wives Litigation, We have One Less Morality Law*, *WASH. POST*, Dec. 12, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> *See, e.g.*, United States House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigation, and Accountability, *“Censorship Laundering: How the U.S.*

includes my book, “*The Indispensable Right: Free Speech in an Age of Rage*,” which explores the size and scope of the censorship system in the United States.<sup>5</sup> As the Subcommittee is aware, due to the recent passing of my father-in-law, Martin Henschel, I had limited time to prepare written testimony for today’s hearing. However, I wanted to raise a few points that I believe are relevant to your important work to address the ongoing threats to free speech in our country.

For years, many of us in the free speech community have raised the alarm over a growing and unprecedented anti-free speech movement in the United States, including a growing infrastructure for censorship that stretched across agencies, universities, and corporations. A cottage industry of “disinformation experts” emerged with millions of dollars funneled to universities and groups to help target or curtail certain viewpoints. This new industry effectively commoditized free speech and, more importantly, monetized censorship. Suddenly, the market was awash with money for those who could offer systems or staff to combat viewpoints deemed misleading or false.

When some of us raised this system in prior testimony, we were often met with dismissals from members who insisted that there was no proof of any coordination with the government in these efforts. For years, many in Congress opposed every effort to expose this censorship system. With the release of the Twitter files, that narrative collapsed. Emails showed government officials directly targeting individuals and groups for censorship or other forms of speech curtailment.

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*Department of Homeland Security Enables the Silencing of Dissent*,” May 11, 2023; “*Hearing on the Weaponization of the Federal Government*,” United States House of Representatives, House Judiciary Committee, Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government, February 9, 2023 (statement of Jonathan Turley, Shapiro Professor of Public Interest Law, The George Washington University Law School); *Examining the ‘Metastasizing’ Domestic Terrorism Threat After the Buffalo Attack: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 117th Cong. (2022) (statement of Jonathan Turley, Shapiro Professor of Public Interest Law, The George Washington University Law School); *Secrecy Orders and Prosecuting Leaks: Potential Legislative Responses to Deter Prosecutorial Abuse of Power: Hearing Before H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 117th Cong. (2021) (statement of Jonathan Turley, Shapiro Professor of Public Interest Law, The George Washington University Law School); *Fanning the Flames: Disinformation and Extremism in the Media: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Comm’n & Tech. of the H. Comm. on Energy & Com.*, 117th Cong. (2021) (statement of Jonathan Turley, Shapiro Professor of Public Interest Law, The George Washington University Law School); *The Right of The People Peacefully to Assemble: Protecting Speech By Stopping Anarchist Violence: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on the Const. of the S. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 116th Cong. (2020) (statement of Jonathan Turley, Shapiro Professor of Public Interest Law, The George Washington University Law School); *Respect for Law Enforcement and the Rule of Law: Hearing Before the Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice*, (2020) (statement of Jonathan Turley, Shapiro Professor of Public Interest Law, The George Washington University Law School); *The Media and The Publication of Classified Information: Hearing Before the H. Select Comm. on Intelligence*, 109<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2006) (statement of Jonathan Turley, Shapiro Professor of Public Interest Law, The George Washington University Law School).

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Turley, *INDISPENSABLE RIGHT: FREE SPEECH IN THE AGE OF RAGE* (Simon & Schuster 2025), <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Indispensable-Right/Jonathan-Turley/9781668047040>.

I would like to begin today with a brief description of what we know about this system and how it functions. I would then like to address what I believe is an emerging threat to free speech values in the United States.

We now know a great deal about the censorship system developed under the Biden Administration in coordination with academic and corporate units. Indeed, the release of new information since January has proven a windfall for those of us who have been seeking greater transparency for years. There is still much to be done. It is essential for Congress to complete this work and allow for total transparency on the past funding and coordination by the government.

The Biden Administration made censorship efforts part of its official mission. Take, for example, the work of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). Given a mandate to help protect election integrity, CISA plunged into the monitoring and targeting of those accused of disinformation. Infrastructure was suddenly interpreted to include speech. CISA Director Jen Easterly declared “the most critical infrastructure is our cognitive infrastructure” and thus included “building that resilience to misinformation and disinformation, I think, is incredibly important.”<sup>6</sup> She pledged to continue to work with the private sector, including social media companies, on that effort. CISA illustrated the same broad range of suspect speech:

- “**Misinformation** is false but not created or shared with the intention of causing harm.
- **Disinformation** is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country.
- **Malinformation** is based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate. An example of malinformation is editing a video to remove important context to harm or mislead.”<sup>7</sup>

Consider the implications of malinformation alone. The government was working with companies to silence those citizens who were posting true facts, but doing so in a manner that the government viewed as misleading. Governments often insist that critics are misleading citizens over particular actions or policies. The Biden Administration made such use of facts into a category for censorship.

The expansion of censorship efforts to cover the misleading use of facts was crushingly predictable. Censorship creates an insatiable appetite for greater and greater speech controls. Historically, nations and companies that have embarked on speech regulation have found themselves on a slippery slope toward ever-expanding levels of speech curtailment. Indeed, the recent decision of Meta to follow X in restoring free speech protections was based on a recognition that it had found itself on that inexorable

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<sup>6</sup> Maggie Miller, *Cyber Agency Beefing Up Disinformation, Misinformation Team*, THE HILL, Nov. 10, 2022, <https://thehill.com/policy/cybersecurity/580990-cyber-agency-beefing-up-disinformation-misinformation-team/>.

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Influence Operations and Disinformation, <https://www.cisa.gov/topics/election-security/foreign-influence-operations-and-disinformation>.

slippery slope of censorship.<sup>8</sup> As I note in my book, history shows something else. No censorship system has ever succeeded. Not one. No system has ever succeeded in killing a single idea or stopping a single movement. It has a perfect failure rate. Yet, it remains the overwhelming impulse of government officials and others who want to control public discourse.

Once empowered to combat disinformation in every form, speech regulators turned on even the use of facts deemed harmful or misleading to average citizens. One of the disclosures from Twitter highlighted the work of Stanford’s Virality Project, which insisted “true stories . . . could fuel hesitancy” overtaking the vaccine or other measures.<sup>9</sup> It is reminiscent of the sedition prosecutions under the Crown before the American Revolution, where truth was no defense.<sup>10</sup> Even true statements could be viewed as seditious and criminal. Once the government gets into the business of speech regulation, the appetite for censorship becomes insatiable as viewpoints are deemed harmful or misleading.

With the government's support, a new industry has emerged with academic and private groups offering their services in targeting or censoring errant citizens or sites. These contractors often strove to keep examples of their work out of the public eye or actively pitched their ability to deflect attention from their government partners. One article featured the work of Kate Starbird, director and co-founder of the University of Washington Center for an Informed Public. In one communication, Starbird cautioned against giving examples of disinformation to keep them from being used by critics, adding “since everything is politicized and disinformation inherently political, every example is bait.”

Likewise, the University of Michigan’s James Park marketed that school’s WiseDex First Pitch program by promising that “our misinformation service helps policymakers at platforms who want to . . . push responsibility for difficult judgments to someone outside the company . . . by externalizing the difficult responsibility of censorship.”

Once again, this information was disclosed only after years of opposition and often required congressional or litigation demands. It is a curious pattern since one would think that these government and private officials would be eager to show examples of how they combatted disinformation and assume a total transparency stance. However, the people within this system were fully aware that polls showed that the public was overwhelmingly opposed to censorship and did not want the government involved in such efforts. Indeed, when specific programs from the Disinformation Governance Board to

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<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Turley, *Meta Culpa: Zuckerberg Joins Musk in the Global Fight for Free Speech*, Res Ipsa Blog ([www.jonathanturley.org](http://www.jonathanturley.org)), Jan. 7, 2025, at <https://jonathanturley.org/2025/01/07/meta-culpa-zuckerburg-joins-musk-in-the-global-fight-for-free-speech/>.

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Turley, *True Stories . . . Could Fuel Hesitancy*: Stanford Project Worked to Censor Even True Stories on Social Media, Res Ipsa Blog ([www.jonathanturley.org](http://www.jonathanturley.org)), March 19, 2023, at <https://jonathanturley.org/2023/03/19/true-stories-could-fuel-hesitancy-stanford-project-worked-to-censor-even-true-stories-on-social-media/>.

<sup>10</sup> See generally, Jonathan Turley, *The Indispensable Right*, *supra*.

the Global Disinformation Index (GDI)<sup>11</sup> were made public, they were shut down by the government after a public outcry.

As a result, minimal information was shared with the public as many continued to spread false denials of government involvement. It took two elections and years of litigation to force some of this information into the open. We are still engaged in that effort, and we still learning about the circle of federal agencies and offices engaged in this work.

We now have undeniable evidence of a comprehensive system of censorship that stretches across the government, academia, and corporate realms. Through disinformation offices, grants, and other means, an array of federal agencies has been active “stakeholders” in this system. This includes Homeland Security, the State Department, the FBI, and other federal agencies actively seeking the censorship of citizens and groups. The partners in this effort extend across social media platforms. The effort is not just to remove dissenting views but to isolate those who voice them. We recently learned that this effort extended even to companies like LinkedIn.<sup>12</sup> Emails revealed in litigation show that the Biden Administration’s censorship efforts included efforts to censor private communications on the WhatsApp messaging service.<sup>13</sup> The effort to limit even access to professional sites like LinkedIn creates a chilling effect on those who would challenge orthodox or official views. It was the same chilling effect experienced by scientists who tried to voice alternative views on vaccines, school closures, masks, or the Covid origins.

The files also show the staggering size of government searches and demands. At one point, the coordination became so tight that, in July 2020, one government official offered to grant temporary top-secret clearance to Twitter executives to allow for easier communications and incorporation into the government network. This close working relationship also allowed the government to use accounts covertly, reportedly with the knowledge of Twitter. One 2017 email sent by an official from United States Central Command (CENTCOM) requested that Twitter “whitelist” Arabic-language Twitter accounts that the government was using to “amplify certain messages.” The government also asked that these accounts be granted the “verified” blue checkmark.

The range of available evidence on government coordination with censorship extends beyond the Twitter Files and involves other agencies. For example, litigation over social media censorship revealed a back-channel exchange between defendant Carol

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<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Turley, Scoring Speech: How the Biden Administration has been Quietly Shaping Public Discourse, Res Ipsa Blog ([www.jonathanturley.org](http://www.jonathanturley.org)), Feb. 20, 2023, <https://jonathanturley.org/2023/02/20/scoring-speech-how-the-biden-administration-has-been-quietly-shaping-speech/>.

<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Turley, “Connect to Opportunity”: State Department Pushed LinkedIn to Censor “Disinformation,” Res Ipsa Blog ([www.jonathanturley.org](http://www.jonathanturley.org)), Apr. 12, 2023, <https://jonathanturley.org/2023/04/12/connect-to-opportunity-new-evidence-shows-state-department-pushing-linkenin-to-censor-disinformation/>.

<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Turley, New Documents Expose Government Censorship Efforts at Facebook and WhatsApp, Res Ipsa Blog ([www.jonathanturley.org](http://www.jonathanturley.org)), March 26, 2023, <https://jonathanturley.org/2023/03/26/new-documents-expose-government-censorship-efforts-at-facebook-and-whatsapp/>.

Crawford, the CDC’s Chief of digital media and a Twitter executive.<sup>14</sup> The timing of the request for the meeting was made on March 18, 2021. Twitter senior manager for public policy Todd O’Boyle asked Crawford to help identify tweets to be censored and emphasized that the company was “looking forward to setting up regular chats.” However, Crawford said that the timing that week was “tricky.” Notably, that week, Dorsey and other CEOs were to appear at a House hearing to discuss “misinformation” on social media and their “content moderation” policies. I had just testified on private censorship in circumventing the First Amendment as a type of censorship by surrogate.<sup>15</sup> Dorsey and the other CEOs were asked at the March 25, 2021, hearing about my warning of a “little brother problem, a problem which private entities do for the government which it cannot legally do for itself.”<sup>16</sup> Dorsey insisted that there was no such censorship office or program. We now know that the claim was inaccurate, including allegations of shadow banning and other means used to censor or suppress certain viewpoints. After the release of the Twitter files, Dorsey apologized and admitted that the company did the “wrong thing for the internet and society” in its censorship efforts.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, with the release of the information on the past censorship efforts, Rep. Ro Khanna (D., Cal.) said that he was appalled by the censorship and was alarmed by the apparent “violation of the 1st Amendment principles.”<sup>18</sup> Even former FBI official and Twitter executive James Baker told the House Oversight Committee that there may be a need to pass legislation to limit the role of government officials in their dealings with social media companies.<sup>19</sup>

We have a great deal of new evidence of how the government funded a wide array of such groups while tasking government officials to feed names and subjects to social media partners for targeting. Consider one group mentioned in the disclosures just last week: the Global Engagement Center (GEC). Recently, a conservative legal group obtained discovery detailing the work of the U.S. Agency for International Development. It appears that USAID worked to target the same three MDM categories, including malinformation encompassing actual facts. This work included support for the GEC to “counterpropaganda” and combat “disinformation” that ranged from “COVID-19 related

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<sup>14</sup> The lawsuit addresses how experts, including Drs. Jayanta Bhattacharya (Stanford University) and Martin Kulldorff (Harvard University), have faced censorship on these platforms.

<sup>15</sup> *Fanning the Flames: Disinformation and Extremism in the Media: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Comm. & Tech. of the H. Comm. on Energy & Com.*, 117th Cong. (2021) (statement of Jonathan Turley, Shapiro Professor of Public Interest Law, The George Washington University Law School).

<sup>16</sup> *Misinformation and Disinformation on Online Platforms: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Comm. & Tech. and Subcomm. on Consumer Protection of the H. Comm. on Energy & Com.*, 117th Cong. (2021).

<sup>17</sup> Zachary Rogerts, Jack Dorsey Takes Blame for “Twitter Files,” ABC6, Dec. 14, 2022, <https://abc6onyourside.com/news/nation-world/jack-dorsey-takes-blame-for-twitter-files-we-did-the-wrong-thing-for-the-internet-and-society-elon-musk-donald-trump-social-media?photo=1>.

<sup>18</sup> *Democratic Rep. Ro Khanna Expressed Concerns Over Twitter’s Censorship of Hunter Biden Laptop*, FOX NEWS, Dec. 2, 2022, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/democratic-rep-ro-khanna-expressed-concerns-twitters-censorship-hunter-biden-laptop-story>.

<sup>19</sup> *Protecting Speech from Government Interference and Social Media Bias, Part 1: Twitter’s Role in Suppressing the Biden Laptop Story: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Oversight & Accountability*, 118th Cong. (2023) (statement of James Baker, Former General Counsel, FBI).

products” to narratives involving the 2020 presidential elections in Moldova. The GEC was eventually shut down after the release of the Twitter files and other details on its censorship programs.

In addition to government officials corresponding with social media companies to pressure them to censor citizens, the Biden Administration funded many of these programs through grants from the State Department and other agencies. The funding proved difficult to track. For example, consider the Global Disinformation Index (GDI).<sup>20</sup> The State Department funded the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which supported GDI. The British group sought to discourage advertisers from supporting sites deemed dangerous due to disinformation. Companies were warned by GDI about “risky” sites that pose “reputational and brand risk” and asked them to avoid “financially supporting disinformation online.” All ten of the “riskiest” sites identified by the GDI are popular with conservatives, libertarians, and independents, including *Reason*, a site featuring legal analysis of conservative law professors. Liberal sites like HuffPost were ranked as the most trustworthy. The categories were as ill-defined as those used by CISA. RealClearPolitics was blacklisted due to what GDI considers “biased and sensational language.” The New York Post was blacklisted because “content sampled from the Post frequently displayed bias, sensationalism and clickbait, which carries the risk of misleading the site’s reader.” After the biased blacklisting was revealed, NED announced that it would withdraw funding for the organization.

The termination of such funding is a major advance under the current Administration. However, it is essential for Congress to force full transparency of the extent of this funding and coordination. For years, many of us complained that, as soon as we confirmed the work of groups like GDI, the government would pull funding. Nevertheless, targeting and censorship work would continue under a myriad of other programs. The American people deserve to know what our government did to curtail free speech.

In my book, *The Indispensable Right*, I lay out measures that Congress can take to restore free speech protections in government and academia. This includes a legislative ban on any federal funds used to support the targeting and censoring of individuals or groups outside of a narrow set of exceptions. Those exceptions would include government efforts to combat alleged criminal conduct, including human trafficking, child pornography and other areas. However, new threats are emerging that must be addressed by Congress if we are to restore free speech protections for Americans.

Last week, I spoke in Berlin at the World Forum on free speech. This year’s meeting of national leaders, business executives, journalists, and others had a pronounced anti-free speech agenda.<sup>21</sup> Europeans have been in a virtual panic over the speech of Vice

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<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Turley, Scoring Speech: How the Biden Administration has been Quietly Shaping Public Discourse, Res Ipsa Blog ([www.jonathanturley.org](http://www.jonathanturley.org)), Feb. 20, 2023, <https://jonathanturley.org/2023/02/20/scoring-speech-how-the-biden-administration-has-been-quietly-shaping-speech/>.

<sup>21</sup> Jonathan Turley, “A New World Order Based on European Values”: The Unholy Union of Globalism and Anti-Free Speech Measures, Res Ipsa Blog ([www.jonathanturley.org](http://www.jonathanturley.org)), March 24, 2025,

President J.D. Vance recently in Munich. Vance legitimately called out the Europeans for their hypocrisy in claiming to be the bastion of democratic values, while simultaneously eviscerating free speech. Free speech is in a free fall in Europe as our allies criminalize an ever-expanding array of speech. For those of us who view free speech as a human right, the investigations and prosecutions in Europe constitute one of the most serious contractions in civil liberties in generations. Yet, the Berlin conference proved to be a gathering of some of the most committed anti-free speech figures in the world as speakers demanded greater speech regulations and prosecutions.

In my view, the European Union (EU) currently constitutes the most serious threat to free speech in the West. Using the Digital Services Act (DSA), the EU has cracked down on speech that the government views as “disinformation” or “incitement.” It has also announced that it would require adherence to its censorship policies outside of its 27-nation territory, including the United States. Some leaders in the United States have supported that effort as well as the use of criminal prosecutions for spreading disinformation.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, one of the speakers at the World Forum was former Democratic Presidential Candidate and U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton. After Elon Musk bought Twitter with a pledge to dismantle the company’s censorship system and release the Twitter files, Clinton called upon the EU to force him and others to restore such “content moderation” through the DSA. The EU did precisely that by threatening Musk with confiscatory fines and even arrest unless he censored users. When Musk decided to interview Donald Trump in this election, EU censors warned him that they would be watching for any disinformation that might lead to possible charges under the DSA.<sup>23</sup>

Our own protections for free speech in the United States will mean little if the EU can force us to the lowest common denominator under the DSA. It is a curious anomaly in U.S. policy. You have a foreign government poised to force the censorship of the speech of American citizens. We routinely impose reciprocal trade barriers on countries for interfering with our markets. Yet, when a government seeks to curtail political speech in the United States, our leaders are silent. This action threatens the most “indispensable right” that defines all Americans. We can lose that right without a single shot being fired or a single law changed in the United States. Alternatively, we can fight for this quintessentially American right. That must begin with Congress declaring the use of the DSA against companies like X as a threat to our citizens and their exercise of free expression.

The past efforts to block investigations and withhold information on the censorship system have failed. However, the motivation is telling. While publicly declaring the need to combat misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, the

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<https://jonathanturley.org/2025/03/24/a-new-world-order-with-european-values-the-unholy-union-of-globalism-and-anti-free-speech-measures/>.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Turley, “A Better Deterrence”: Hillary Clinton Suggests the Possible Arrest of Americans Spreading Disinformation, Res Ipsa Blog ([www.jonathanturley.org](http://www.jonathanturley.org)), Sept. 18, 2024, <https://jonathanturley.org/2024/09/18/a-better-deterrence-hillary-clinton-calls-for-the-arrest-of-americans-spreading-disinformation/>.

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Turley, “We are Monitoring”: EU Censors Threaten Musk Ahead of the Trump Interview, Res Ipsa Blog, ([www.jonathanturley.org](http://www.jonathanturley.org)), Aug. 13, 2024, <https://jonathanturley.org/2024/08/13/we-are-monitoring-eu-censor-threatens-musk-ahead-of-the-trump-interview/>.



Biden Administration and its allies in the censorship system struggled to withhold information on their actual targets or actions. The reason again is obvious.

The public understands the threat to free speech and strongly supports an investigation into the FBI's role in censoring social media. Despite the push for censorship by some politicians and pundits, most Americans still want free-speech protections. It is in our DNA. This country was founded on deep commitments to free speech and limited government – and that constitutional tradition is no conspiracy theory. Polls show that 73% of Americans believe that these companies censored material for political purposes.<sup>24</sup> Another poll showed that 63% want an investigation into FBI censorship allegations.<sup>25</sup>

Regardless of party affiliation, we should all want answers to these questions. We can differ on our conclusions, but the first step for Congress is to force greater transparency on controversies involving bias to censorship. Greater transparency is the only course that can help resolve the doubts that many have over the motivations and actions of their government. I remain optimistic that it is still possible to have a civil and constructive discussion of these issues. Regardless of our political affiliations and differences, everyone in this room is here because of a deep love and commitment to this country. It is what brought us from vastly different backgrounds and areas in our country. We share a single article of faith in our Constitution and the values that it represents.

Almost 250 years ago, Tom Paine famously wrote that “These are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.” That was the first line of a work published by Paine in the *Pennsylvania Journal* on December 19, 1776, a work which would become known as “*The American Crisis*.” We are living through a new crisis in the fight for free speech. The anti-free speech movement that has swept over Europe has now reached our shores. The United States remains a final line of defense for free speech, a nation founded on free speech as our indispensable right as a free people. This is a crisis of faith as the “summer soldier and sunshine patriot” finds every excuse for remaining silent as others are censored or canceled for their views. Congress must step forward to demand both greater transparency and protection for free speech. This new “American crisis” can be our greatest American moment in speaking in one voice – Democrats, Republicans, and Independents – in support of the right that defines us as a people.

Once again, thank you for the honor of appearing before you to discuss these important issues, and I would be happy to answer any questions from the Subcommittee.

**Jonathan Turley**  
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**George Washington University**

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<sup>24</sup> Sean Burch, *Nearly 75% of Americans Believe Twitter, Facebook Censor Posts Based on Viewpoints, Pew Finds*, THE WRAP, Aug. 19, 2020, <https://www.thewrap.com/nearly-75-percent-twitter-facebook-censor/>.

<sup>25</sup> *63% Want FBI's Social Media Activity Investigated*, RASMUSSEN REPORTS, Dec. 26, 2022, [https://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/politics/partner\\_surveys/twittergate\\_63\\_want\\_fbi\\_s\\_social\\_media\\_activity\\_investigated](https://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/partner_surveys/twittergate_63_want_fbi_s_social_media_activity_investigated).