

Facebook, Twitter Censor 'New York Post' Story on Hunter Biden

Who would have thought that in 2020, censorship of information would come not from the government but from broad platforms like Facebook and Twitter? The two tech giants have massive amounts of influence and effect due to the power social media wields.

Wednesday the *New York Post* released a breaking story containing alleged emails showing Hunter Biden as having ties to some questionable business dealings in China, as well as emails suggesting that he introduced his father, then-vice president Joe Biden, to a top executive at Ukrainian natural gas firm Burisma Holdings in 2015.

Upon its release, Twitter and Facebook fact-checkers began to censor the story. On Twitter, the story could not be shared and accounts attempting to share it were locked. On Facebook, algorithms were used to slow the message from appearing on people's news feeds.

The *New York Post* is the fourth largest newspaper publication in the United States, and even this publication could not share its own story on Twitter. Twitter blocked the *Post's* account from doing so.

The problem at hand is that we are less than a month away from the election, and Twitter and Facebook are beginning to reach a level of censorship that could easily be called election interference. It is apparent that the CEOs of these companies have liberal leanings, and this is not the first time conservative voices and news have been censored on their platforms.

Twitter said it decided to block links to the *Post's* story because it couldn't be sure about the origins of the emails in the expose. They said their policy "prohibits the use of our service to distribute content obtained without authorization" and that it doesn't want to encourage hacking by allowing people to share "possibly illegally obtained materials."

Twitter declined to comment on how it had reached the decision to block the *New York Post's* stories. They have yet to cite any evidence as to why they are locking accounts and blocking the spread of this breaking story.

In response Thursday, three Republican senators, Ted Cruz, Texas; Lindsey Graham, S.C.; and Josh Hawley, Mo.; told reporters outside of the Senate Judiciary Committee room that they believe the social media giants are interfering in the 2020 elections by censoring and suspending accounts which share stories on Hunter Biden from the *New York Post*. They will vote Tuesday to subpoena Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey concerning Twitter's censoring stories about Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden.

Hawley has been a leading critic of social media in recent years. He tweeted, "So @Facebook is going to actively censor a @nypost investigative story on the Democrat candidate for president. But rest assured, Facebook is a neutral platform with no political viewpoints!"

His colleague in Congress, Rep. Ken Buck, R-Colo., voiced a similar complaint against Facebook and Twitter: "They've continued to censor conservatives, and now they're sweeping negative stories about Biden under the rug."

These lawmakers are accusing Twitter and Facebook of hypocrisy.

Twitter did nothing to censor reporting on the Steele dossier that was damaging to President Donald J. Trump. All the evidence points to the Steele dossier as being a made-up ploy

to derail President Trump's presidency. Neither Twitter nor Facebook did anything to flag reporting on Russia collusion allegations, which had zero credible evidence.

"We're going to finally have an accounting that's long overdue," said Sen. Graham. "The power behind these platforms have been taken to a level that truly is dangerous."

"This is election interference and we're 19 days out from an election," said Cruz. "It has no precedent in the history of democracy."

Though Facebook did not block the story, staff has admitted to hindering its spread on social media. Hawley has also formally requested CEO Mark Zuckerberg appear before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism in a coming hearing titled, "Digital Platforms and Election Interference."

It is no secret that Facebook and Twitter have liberal political leanings. However, their actions are a clear overstep. When White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany tried sharing the *Post's* story on her personal account, Twitter locked her account. The only way for her to access her personal account is to delete the link she posted to the *New York Post* article about Hunter Biden.

She told Sean Hannity on his program Wednesday that it's not a temporary blockage.

"When I log on to my Twitter account, it says I'm permanently banned," she said. "They essentially have me at gunpoint and said unless you delete this story, a news story by the *New York Post*, I cannot regain access to my account."

Twitter also suspended the official account of the Trump campaign Thursday for tweets calling Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden a "liar" and posting a video about Hunter Biden's business dealings. The account also posted a link to a video about Hunter Biden's overseas business dealings,

specifically citing the New York Post's most recent allegations.

These published emails suggest that Hunter Biden introduced his father, Vice President Joe Biden, to a top executive at Ukrainian natural gas firm. This would thereby tie then Vice President Biden to some of the questionable financial dealings that occurred between Hunter Biden and Burisma Holdings.

Is it really social media's job to fact-check every story? How do we as the American people know that these tech giants, with their clearly liberal bias, are not picking and choosing what to police? Social media has a clear ability to sway people's minds about current political topics. To see this right before the election shows that Twitter and Facebook are trying to hamper the spread of any information that could be damaging to the Biden campaign.

Here in the United States, we have a right to free speech. It is protected by the Bill of Rights. One of the main bedrocks of this right is having a free press. What Twitter and Facebook are doing during this election with all of their "fact-check" censorship is arguably chipping away at our right to free speech. This is dangerous. This is election interference—and something must be done about it. {eoa}

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