

Florida Governor Moves to Cancel Big Tech Censorship

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill “to hold Big Tech accountable by driving transparency and safeguarding Floridians’ ability to access and participate in online platforms.” The bill grants state residents the right to sue social media companies if they suppress speech or de-platform users with political views that oppose mainstream narratives.

If social media violates the new law by censoring politicians, “[t]he Florida Election Commission will impose fines of \$250,000 per day on any social media company that deplatforms any candidate for statewide office, and \$25,000 per day for de-platforming candidates for non-statewide offices.”

A report highlighted the bill’s resolution for civilians stating the “[c]ourts may award up to \$100,000 in damages to an individual if a social media platform censors or shadowbans a user’s content, deplatforms a user or if it hasn’t applied censorship or deplatforming standards in a consistent manner.”

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas made comments on a recent First Amendment case, stating, “Today’s digital platforms provide avenues for historically unprecedented amounts of speech, including speech by government actors. Also, unprecedented, however, is the concentrated control of so much speech in the hands of a few private parties. We will soon have no choice but to address how our legal doctrines apply to highly concentrated, privately owned information infrastructure such as digital platforms.”

Many prominent leaders have fallen prey to Big Tech censorship, such as the CEO of MyPillow and former president Donald Trump.

Mike Lindell was permanently suspended from Twitter in January

for “repeatedly violating the company’s civic integrity policy.” Lindell contested the move, declaring it was his evidence against voting machine fraud that prompted Twitter’s actions. Lindell developed and released his own platform called Frank but the launch failed after “coming under massive cyber attack”. There are no updates on when the capability to create user accounts might become available. Frank’s main page is the home of conservative newsreels, interviews and documentaries disclosing Lindell’s findings on 2020 election fraud investigations. Users can submit their phone number to receive text updates for live broadcasts from Lindell’s studio.

Similarly, upon being permanently banned from several social media platforms, Donald Trump launched a website where followers can email comments via web form, read public statements and request a personal greeting for special occasions. A new page was recently added enabling Trump to communicate in one directional ‘Twitter-like’ posts.

Trump reportedly said before launching the site, “This is meant to be a temporary way of getting my thoughts and ideas out to the public without Fake News spin, but the website is not a ‘platform’. It is merely a way of communicating until I decide on what the future will be for the choice or establishment of a platform. It will happen soon. Stay tuned!”

Of the bill to stop Big Tech censorship, DeSantis said, “We are seeing other states now following suit. It starts with Florida but it doesn’t end in Florida.” The bill is expected to be signed into law on July 1, 2021. It is unclear whether tenets of the legislation will retroactively address incidents of censorship and de-platforming.

“Over the years, these [social media] platforms have changed from neutral platforms that provide Americans with the freedom to speak to enforcers of preferred narratives ... They are exerting a power that really has no precedent in American

history,” DeSantis said during the signing ceremony. {eoa}

*For more than a decade, **Tiffany Benson’s** passion for writing has exceeded most of her interests. When she’s not catching up on politics or watching documentaries, she enjoys journaling, fiction and contributing to her blog: .*