

Gov. Ron DeSantis Holds Big Tech Accountable, Empowers Floridians' Freedom With New Bill

Governor Ron DeSantis signed an unprecedented bill, which will allow Floridians who are treated unfairly by Big Tech platforms to have the right to sue these companies and win monetary damages.

SB 7072, effective July 1, 2021, is the first bill of its kind in the United States. It safeguards the rights of every Floridian by requiring social media companies to be transparent about their content moderation practices and give users proper notice of changes to those policies. The bill states that the attorney general of Florida can bring action against companies that violate this law under Florida's Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act. If social media platforms are found to have violated the antitrust law, they will be restricted from contracting with any public entity.

Courts may award up to \$100,000 in damages to an individual if social media platforms "unfairly censor, shadow ban, deplatform, or apply post-prioritization algorithms to Florida candidates, Florida users or Florida residents."

When Big Tech deplatforms Florida political candidates for statewide office, the Florida Election Commission will impose fines of \$250,000 per day. The fine is \$25,000 per day when deplatforming candidates for other offices.

During a press conference yesterday, Governor DeSantis said, "Florida is the first state to hold Big Tech accountable by empowering each and every Floridian silenced by arbitrary corporate censorship to fight back. This is a groundbreaking

bill that protects Floridians from Silicon Valley's power grab. They are exerting a power that really has no precedent in American history."

DeSantis also said, "We are seeing other states now following suit. It starts in Florida, but it doesn't end in Florida."

In his press release, DeSantis said, "This session, we took action to ensure that 'We the People' – real Floridians across the Sunshine State – are guaranteed protection against the Silicon Valley elites. Many in our state have experienced censorship and other tyrannical behavior firsthand in Cuba and Venezuela. If Big Tech censors enforce rules inconsistently, to discriminate in favor of the dominant Silicon Valley ideology, they will now be held accountable."

Liberty Counsel founder and chairman Mat Staver said, "We commend Gov. Ron DeSantis for his excellent leadership and for protecting the freedom of speech for Floridians. Gov. DeSantis has set a great example for all other governors, and we are encouraged to see others follow this path. We must protect free speech. Florida is leading the way to stop the abuses that happen when the Silicon Valley elites censor the free flow of ideas. Censorship is un-American and the antithesis to freedom." {eo}

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