

New Lawsuit Claims Facebook, YouTube, Twitter Censors Anti-Islamic Comments

Prominent patriotic activists filed a lawsuit alleging social media channels actively censor any anti-Islamic comments they may promote.

Plaintiffs include Robert Spencer, Jihad Watch, the American Freedom Defense Initiative and Pamela Geller, whose Muhammad Cartoon Contest was attacked last year by Islamic State terrorists.

Social media channels like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube censor comments they deem offensive, which may include anti-Islamic sentiments, the lawsuit alleges:

Geller and Spencer, along with the organizations they run, are often subject to censorship and discrimination by Facebook, Twitter and YouTube because of Geller's and Spencer's beliefs and views, which Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube consider expression that is offensive to Muslims.

Such discrimination, which is largely religion-based in that these California businesses are favoring adherents of Islam over those who are not, is prohibited in many states, but particularly in California by the state's anti-discrimination law, which is broadly construed to prohibit all forms of discrimination. However, because of the immunity granted by the federal government, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are free to engage in their otherwise unlawful, discriminatory practices.

The American Freedom Law Center, who filed the lawsuit, maintains the plaintiffs comments are constitutionally

protected by the First Amendment.

Denying a person or organization access to these important social media forums based on the content and viewpoint of the person's or organization's speech on matters of public concern is an effective way of silencing or censoring speech and depriving the person or organization of political influence and business opportunities. Due to the importance of social media to political, social, and commercial exchanges, the censorship at issue in this Complaint is an unmatched form of censorship.

The lawsuit is further proof of how social media undermines conservative values.

In an article earlier this year, popular technology blog Gizmodo published how several former Facebook employees alleged the company routinely worked to suppress conservative and Christian viewpoints on the social network and artificially highlighted other news stories even when objective metrics did not indicate they were "trending." Thune's committee has legislative and oversight jurisdiction over issues related to Internet communications, consumer protection, and media issues.

"Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have notoriously censored speech that they deem critical of Islam, thereby effectively enforcing blasphemy laws here in the United States with the assistance of the federal government," David Yerushalmi, AFLC co-founder and senior counsel said.

"It has been the top agenda item of Islamic supremacists to impose such standards on the West. Its leading proponents are the Muslim Brotherhood's network of Islamist activist groups in the West and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which co-sponsored, with support from Obama and then-Secretary of State Clinton, a U.N. resolution which called on all nations to ban speech that could promote mere hostility to

Islam. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are falling in line, and we seek to stop this assault on our First Amendment freedoms," he concluded.