

Twitter Political Censorship

Diego Wahl



The Claim:

Large Social Media platform companies are censoring conservative viewpoints on their platforms.

FOX NEWS

FOX BUSINESS

FOX NEWS GO

FOX NEWS RADIO

FOX NATION

FOX NEWS FLASH



Watch Live

Show Clips

News Clips

Login



John Kennedy says 'we need to find out' why Twitter censored Hunter Biden story

Oct. 20, 2020 - 6:24 - Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., discusses the Senate panel delaying a vote to subpoena Twitter CEO on censorship accusations.



For video troubleshooting and help [click here](#).

U.S. Congressman Matt Gaetz Demands Twitter Release All Evidence of Political Collusion on Tweet Censorship – Concerns California Democrats

🕒 Last Updated: Wednesday, 23 June 2021 11:02



0

June 23, 2021 - Washington, D.C. — U.S. Congressman Matt Gaetz (FL-01) has issued the following letter to Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey calling on the platform to release all documents and communications showing censorship of political tweets at the behest of California Democrats. The letter comes as conservative influencer Rogan O’Handley’s lawsuit against former California Secretary of State and current U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) **exposed** collusion between Twitter and politicians in California.



Full text of the letter sent to Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey can be found [HERE](#) or below.

LETTER TEXT

Mr. Jack Dorsey

CEO, Twitter

1355 Market Street Suite 900

San Francisco, CA 94103

FOX NEWS

FOX BUSINESS

FOX NEWS GO

FOX NEWS @ RADIO

FOX NATION

FOX NEWS FLASH



Watch Live

Show Clips

News Clips

Login



John Kennedy says ‘we need to find out’ why Twitter censored Hunter Biden story

Oct. 20, 2020 - 6:24 - Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., discusses the Senate panel delaying a vote to subpoena Twitter CEO on censorship accusations.



For video troubleshooting and help [click here](#).

U.S. Congressman Matt Gaetz Demands Twitter Release All Evidence of Political Collusion on Tweet Censorship – Concerns California Democrats

© Last Updated: Wednesday, 23 June 2021 11:02



June 23, 2021 - Washington, D.C. — U.S. Congressman Matt Gaetz (FL-01) has issued the following letter to Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey calling on the platform to release all documents and communications showing censorship of political tweets at the behest of California Democrats. The letter comes as conservative influencer Rogan O'Handley's lawsuit against former California Secretary of State and current U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) **exposed** collusion between Twitter and politicians in California.



San Francisco, CA 94103

Full text of the letter sent to Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey can be found [HERE](#) or below.

LETTER TEXT

Mr. Jack Dorsey

CEO, Twitter

1355 Market Street Suite 900

Adriana Cohen: Censorship of conservatives proves Twitter & Facebook are enemies of free speech, free press

OPINION · Published October 25

Twitter is not keeping 'all voices on the platform' — far from it

OPINION By Adriana Cohen | Creators Syndicate



FOX NEWS

FOX BUSINESS

FOX NEWS GO

FOX NEWS RADIO

FOX NATION

FOX NEWS FLASH



Watch Live

Show Clips

News Clips

Login



John Kennedy says 'we need to find out' why Twitter censored Hunter Biden story

Oct. 20, 2020 - 6:24 - Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., discusses the Senate panel delaying a vote to subpoena Twitter CEO on censorship accusations.



For video troubleshooting and help [click here](#).



Rep. Jim Jordan @Jim_Jordan · 2h

Democrats don't want to stop Big Tech's bias against conservatives.

They want MORE censorship.

And they openly admit it!

513

952

4K



Rep. Darrell Issa @repdarrellissa · 20h

The censorship of conservatives is the Big Tech crisis of our times – and it's time to take action to end it.

Read my full statement here: issa.house.gov/media/press-re...



UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN
DARRELL ISSA
CALIFORNIA'S 50TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

This is a landmark day in the fight to rein in the antitrust abuses of Big Tech – but not in the way the Democrat majority would like you to believe. While the legislative package we are debating today makes repeated references to “breaking up monopolies” and “opening up platforms,” it will do little or nothing of the kind.

It is, instead, an unprecedented expansion of big government, an invitation for China to gain even greater access to our data, the creation of new and broader powers for Biden Administration regulators, and a grab-bag of anti-business provisions that won't empower consumers and will, at best, create a multiple of problem entities out of currently larger ones.

11

31

76



OPINION · Published October 25

Adriana Cohen: Censorship of conservatives proves Twitter & Facebook are enemies of free speech, free press

Twitter is not keeping 'all voices on the platform' – far from it

OPINION By Adriana Cohen | Creators Syndicate



SUBSCRIBE NOW
Months. Save 98%.

The Bulletin

News Sports Entertainment Lifestyle [Opinion] USA TODAY Obituaries E-Edition Legal

OPINION This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.

View from the right: social media and their left-leaning leaders attack free speech

Martin Fey For The Bulletin

Published 10:00 a.m. ET Jun. 11, 2021 | Updated 12:38 p.m. ET Jun. 17, 2021

[View Comments](#)



But:

June 24th



Facebook's Top 10 @FacebooksTop10 · 1h

...

The top-performing link posts by U.S. Facebook pages in the last 24 hours are from:

1. Ben Shapiro
2. Ben Shapiro
3. Ricky Gervais
4. Ben Shapiro
5. Ben Shapiro
6. Ben Shapiro
7. Nathan W. Pyle
8. Ben Shapiro
9. Diamond And Silk
10. Dan Bongino



9



18



36



But: How

June 23rd



Facebook's Top 10 @FacebooksTop10 · Jun 23

The top-performing link posts by U.S. Facebook pages in the last 24 hours are from:

1. Ben Shapiro
2. Creative Healthy Family
3. FOX 29
4. Ben Shapiro
5. Ben Shapiro
6. Ben Shapiro
7. ForAmerica
8. Dr. Sasa
9. Sean Hannity
10. Glenn Beck

1 18 25

But: How true

June 22nd



But: How true is

June 21st



But: How true is this?

June 17th



The Specific Claims:

- Social media companies, such as Twitter and Facebook, are censoring users on the basis of ideological and political reasons.
- This censorship comes in the form of shadow banning and **suppression** of conversation of right-wing viewpoints.
- By extension, these same companies have a bias *against* conservative viewpoints and are even coordinating with 'the Radical Left'^[1]

[1]: Trump, Donald J [@POTUS]. 8 January 2021. *"As I have been saying for a long time, Twitter has gone further and further in banning free speech, and tonight, Twitter employees have coordinated with the Democrats and Radical Left in removing my account from their platform, to silence me - and YOU, the 75,000,000 great..."* [Twitter]. Since removed.



Ben Shapiro ✓

@benshapiro

...

What we are watching -- the militarization of social media on behalf of Democrats, and the overt suppression of material damaging to Democrats to the cheering of the press -- is one of the single most dangerous political moments I have ever seen.

9:00 AM · Oct 15, 2020 · Twitter Web App

17K Retweets **1,342** Quote Tweets **63.8K** Likes



The Data & The Methodology:

- Tweets directly scraped from Twitter via the Twitter API and Tweepy
- Searched on 'Biden' and 'Trump' keywords separately
- Duplicates, retweets included, are not ultimately dropped.
 - Tweets go viral, and we wanted our dataset to reflect that.
- Time frame of scrape is variable, but mostly scraped during week of June 14th

What this methodology will do:

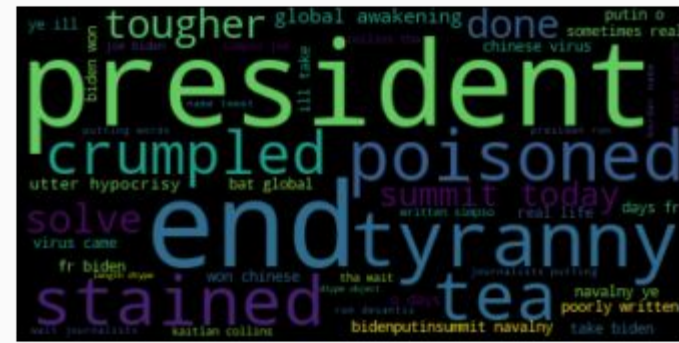
- Perform topic modeling and sentiment analysis to compare and contrast discussions relating to central political figures on **Twitter**.

What this methodology will NOT do:

- Look into specific 'communities' and how they interact both with themselves and other communities on Twitter.
 - Meaning, in part, that we can't get a gauge on community interactions and how widely shared tweets become.
- Look into the amount of interaction a particular topic is engaged in.

The Biden Data

VADER average compound score of 0.00237 (very slightly positive)



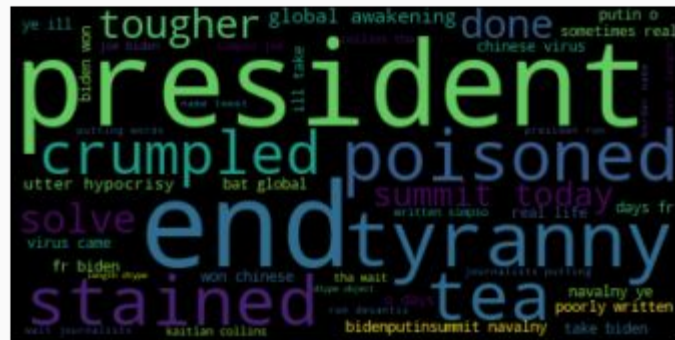
CorEx topics (no anchors):

- 0: killed, officer, secret, heroic, service, dives, tries, agent, rioters, jan
1: hunter, asians, knew, slur, registry, door, let, text, gun, confiscation
2: yellow, asian, cousin, independence, lectures, sexism, weeks, doocy, bin, trump
3: longer, progressive, fooled, tyranny, awakening, career, global, politicians, left, anger
4: gave, list, critical, infrastructure, usual, folks, targets, cup, punishment, ll
5: police, capitol, texas, wall, national, build, announced, jobs, htt, creating
6: cyber, limits, nato, europe, arena, wit, eu, success, allies, diplomacy
7: jim, jordan, rt, term, half, charge, gop, republican, congress, make
8: collins, kaitlan, cnn, reporter, angry, female, staffer, lose, hell, problem
9: putin, summit, meeting, vladimir, biden, geneva, says, russian, helsinki, different

Notably, 2 of the top 10 topics formed by CorEx are directly related to Hunter Biden

The Biden Data

VADER average compound score of
0.00237 (very slightly positive)



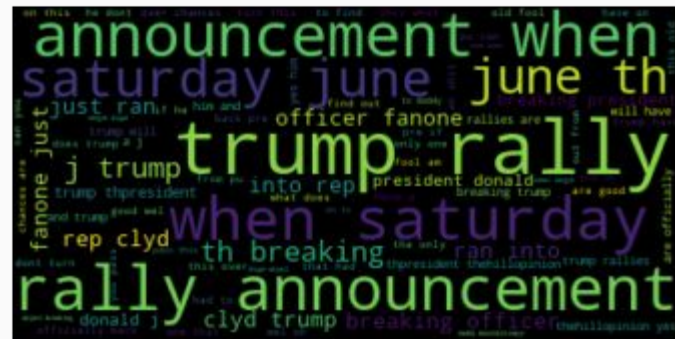
CorEx topics (no anchors):

- 0: killed, officer, secret, heroic, service, dives, tries, agent, rioters, jan
- 1: **hunter, asians, knew, slur, registry, door, let, text, gun, confiscation**
- 2: **yellow, asian, cousin, independence, lectures, sexism, weeks, doocy, bin, trump**
- 3: **longer, progressive, fooled, tyranny, awakening, career, global, politicians, left, anger**
- 4: gave, list, critical, infrastructure, usual, folks, targets, cup, punishment, ll
- 5: police, capitol, texas, wall, national, build, announced, jobs, htt, creating
- 6: cyber, limits, nato, europe, arena, wit, eu, success, allies, diplomacy
- 7: jim, jordan, rt, term, half, charge, gop, republican, congress, make
- 8: **collins, kaitlan, cnn, reporter, angry, female, staffer, lose, hell, problem**
- 9: putin, summit, meeting, vladimir, biden, geneva, says, russian, helsinki, different

[illegible]

The Trump Data

VADER average compound score of
-0.0408 (very slightly negative)



CorEx topics (no anchors):

- 0: officer,fanone,jan,clyde,rep,introduced,typical,capitol,tour,guy
1: rally,wellington,june,hold,saturday,ohio,rallies,officially,ivanka,cohen
2: framing,organized,treason,riot,basically,weisselberg,january,noting,worth,supporters
3: attacks,outside,protect,fro,coming,thing,democracy,vladimir,weeks,sexism
4: border,incredible,interaction,relayed,confirmed,southern,story,announces,mile,visit
5: people,blame,insurrection,amp,democrat,hell,clinton,day,tucker,hillary
6: biden,putin,helsinki,jim,different,president,summit,jordan,experienced,meeting
7: doj,garland,senate,era,bolton,merrick,power,barr,democrats,john
8: justice,election,house,overturn,emails,department,oversight,voted,rights,yesterday
9: don,like,jr,time,prison,didn,think,came,fox,media

The Trump Data

VADER average compound score of
-0.0408 (very slightly negative)



CorEx topics (no anchors):

0: officer,fanone,jan,clyde,rep,introduced,typical,capitol,tour,guy

1: rally,wellington,june,hold,saturday,ohio,rallies,officially,ivanka,cohen

2: framing,organized,treason,riot,basically,weisselberg,january,noting,worth,support

3: attacks,outside,protect,from,coming,thing,democracy,vladimir,weeks,sexism

4: border,incredible,interaction,relayed,confirmed,southern,story,announces,mile,visit

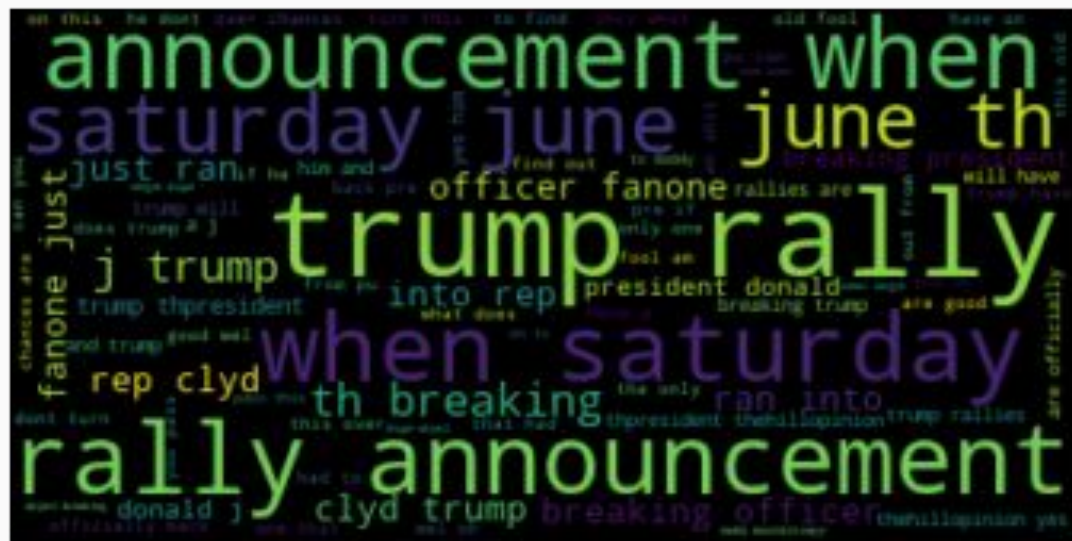
5: people,blame,insurrection,amp,democrat,hell,clinton,day,tucker,hillary

6: biden,putin,helsinki,jim,different,president,summit,jordan,experienced,meeting

7: doj,garland,senate,era,bolton,merrick,power,barr,democrats,john

8: justice, election, house, overturn, emails, department, oversight, voted, rights, yesterday

9: don,like,jr,time,prison,didn,think,came,fox,media



The Scattertext

Some Conclusions

- It would be difficult to argue that topics that cast Biden in a negative light, such as Hunter Biden for example, are stifled on the platform.
- Frankly, a LOT of Twitter discourse is negative, regardless of the topic at hand.
- Most of the 'big names' in Twitter political discourse seem to be conservatives.
 - Jack Posobiec, Candice Owens, Ben Shapiro
 - Also Catturd2

Some Takeaways/Lessons Learned

- VADER sentiment analysis does *not* perform well on Tweets.
 - Seems unable to handle the often sarcastic style present on Twitter.
- Scattertext stops working pretty quickly once a certain threshold (~50,000 documents or so) is met.
- Creating a concept of a user might be helpful for future investigation
 - Community finding algorithms exist
 - PageRank to measure influence?

Thanks!

