

CISA Was Behind the Attempt to Control Your Thoughts, Speech, and Life

TOPICS: Censorship CISA Constitution Free Speech Social Media

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By **Brownstone Institute**

Keeping up with the corruption of the Covid regime feels like drinking from a firehose. The volume of the fraud, the pace of new discoveries, and the breadth of the operations are overwhelming. This makes it imperative for groups like Brownstone Institute to digest the onslaught of information and communicate salient themes and dispositive facts, particularly given the dereliction of mainstream media.

On Monday, the House Judiciary Committee released **a report** on how the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) “colluded with Big Tech and ‘disinformation’ partners to censor Americans,” adding to the informational firehose we work to imbibe.

The 36-page report raises three familiar issues: first, government actors worked with third parties to overturn the First Amendment; second, censors prioritized political narratives over truthfulness; and third, an unaccountable bureaucracy hijacked American society.

1. CISA's Collusion to Overturn the First Amendment

The House Report reveals that CISA, a branch of the Department of Homeland Security, worked with social-media platforms to censor posts it considered dis-, mis-, or malinformation. Brian Scully, the head of CISA's censorship team, conceded that this process, known as "switchboarding," would "trigger content moderation."

Additionally, CISA funded the nonprofit EI-ISAC in 2020 to bolster its censorship operations. EI-ISAC worked to report and track "misinformation across all channels and platforms." In launching the nonprofit, the government boasted that it "leverage[d] DHS CISA's relationship with social media organizations to ensure priority treatment of misinformation reports."

The switchboard programs directly contradict sworn testimony from CISA Director Jen Easterly. "We don't censor anything... we don't flag anything to social media organizations at all," Easterly told Congress in March. "We don't do any censorship." Her statement was more than a lie; it omitted the institutionalization of the practice she denied. The agency's initiatives relied on a collusive apparatus of private-public partnerships designed to suppress unapproved information.

This should sound familiar.

Alex Berenson gained access to thousands of Twitter communications that **uncovered concrete evidence** that government actors – including White House Covid Advisor Andy Slavitt – worked to censor him for criticizing Biden's Covid policies.

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White House Director of Digital Strategy Rob Flaherty **privately lobbied** social-media groups to remove a video of Tucker Carlson reporting the link between Johnson & Johnson's vaccine and blood clots.

Facebook worked with the CDC **to censor posts** related to the Covid "lab-leak" hypothesis. Company employees later met with the Department of Health and Human Services to de-platform the "disinformation dozen," a group including Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

These were not cherry-picked examples – they were part of an institutional collusion to strip Americans of their First Amendment rights. Journalists Michael Shellenberger and Matt Taibbi exposed the **"Censorship Industrial Complex,"** a collection of the world's most powerful government agencies, NGOs, and private corporations that worked together to silence dissent.

The Supreme Court has held that it is “axiomatic” that the government cannot “induce, encourage, or promote private persons to accomplish what it is constitutionally forbidden to accomplish.” Yet, CISA has joined the disturbing tendency of public-private partnerships designed to impede Americans’ right to information and freedom of speech.

2. Political Operatives

Second, these programs were not idealistic attempts to promote the truth; they were calculated programs designed to quash inconvenient but truthful narratives.

The report outlines how CISA censored “malinformation – truthful information that, according to the government, may carry the potential to mislead.” Journalist Lee Fang later wrote that the malinformation campaign “highlights not only the broad authority that the federal government has to shape the political content available to the public, but also the toolkit that it relies upon to limit scrutiny in the regulation of speech.”

In this system, uncensored information has a tacit government approval, amounting to a system of widespread propaganda.

“State and local election officials used the CISA-funded EI-ISAC in an effort to silence criticism and political dissent,” the report notes. “For example, in August 2022, a Loudon County, Virginia, government official reported a Tweet featuring an unedited video of a county official ‘because it was posted as part of a larger campaign to discredit the word of’ that official. The Loudon County official’s remark that the account she flagged ‘is connected to Parents Against Critical Race Theory’ reveals that her ‘misinformation report’ was nothing more than a politically motivated censorship attempt.”

The officials supporting the operation remained unrepentant in their aim to advance political agendas. Dr. Kate Starbird, a member of CISA’s “Misinformation & Disinformation” subcommittee, lamented that many Americans seem to “accept malinformation as ‘speech’ and within democratic norms.”

Of course, the program explicitly violated the Constitution. The First Amendment does not discriminate based on the veracity of a statement. “Some false statements are inevitable if there is to be an open and vigorous expression of views in public and private conversation,” the Supreme Court’s controlling opinion held in *United States v. Alvarez*. But CISA – led by zealots like Dr. Starbird – appointed themselves the arbiters of truth and worked with the most powerful information companies in the world to purge dissent.

This was part of a larger political campaign.

Hunter Biden's laptop, natural immunity, the lab-leak theory, and side effects of the vaccine were all censored at the government's behest. The truth of the reports were not at issue; instead, they presented inconvenient narratives for Washington's political class, who then used the Orwellian label of "malinformation" to lend cover to eviscerating the First Amendment.

3. The Terror of the Administrative State

Third, the report exposes the increasing power of the administrative state. Federal bureaucrats rely on anonymity and unaccountability. Private industry employees could never oversee a disaster like the Covid response and maintain their jobs. It'd be like if BP's head of safety for the Gulf of Mexico received a promotion after the oil spill.

But unelected officials like CISA officials enjoy ever-increasing power over Americans' lives without having to answer for their calamities. Suzanne Spaulding, a member of the Misinformation & Disinformation Subcommittee, warned that it was "only a matter of time before someone realizes we exist and starts asking about our work."

Spaulding's comment reflects the power that CISA wields and the benefit it derives from its lack of public exposure. Most Americans have never heard of CISA despite its overwhelming influence over lockdowns.

In March 2020, CISA **divided** the American workforce into categories of "essential" and "nonessential." Within hours, California became the first state to issue a "stay at home" edict. This began a previously unimaginable assault on Americans' civil liberties.

The House Report indicates that CISA was a central actor in censoring criticism of the Covid regime in the ensuing months and years. The agency is representative of the cabal of censorial and unaccountable officials engaged in public-private partnerships designed to keep us in the dark.

[Read full report \(.pdf\)](#)

Source: *Brownstone Institute*