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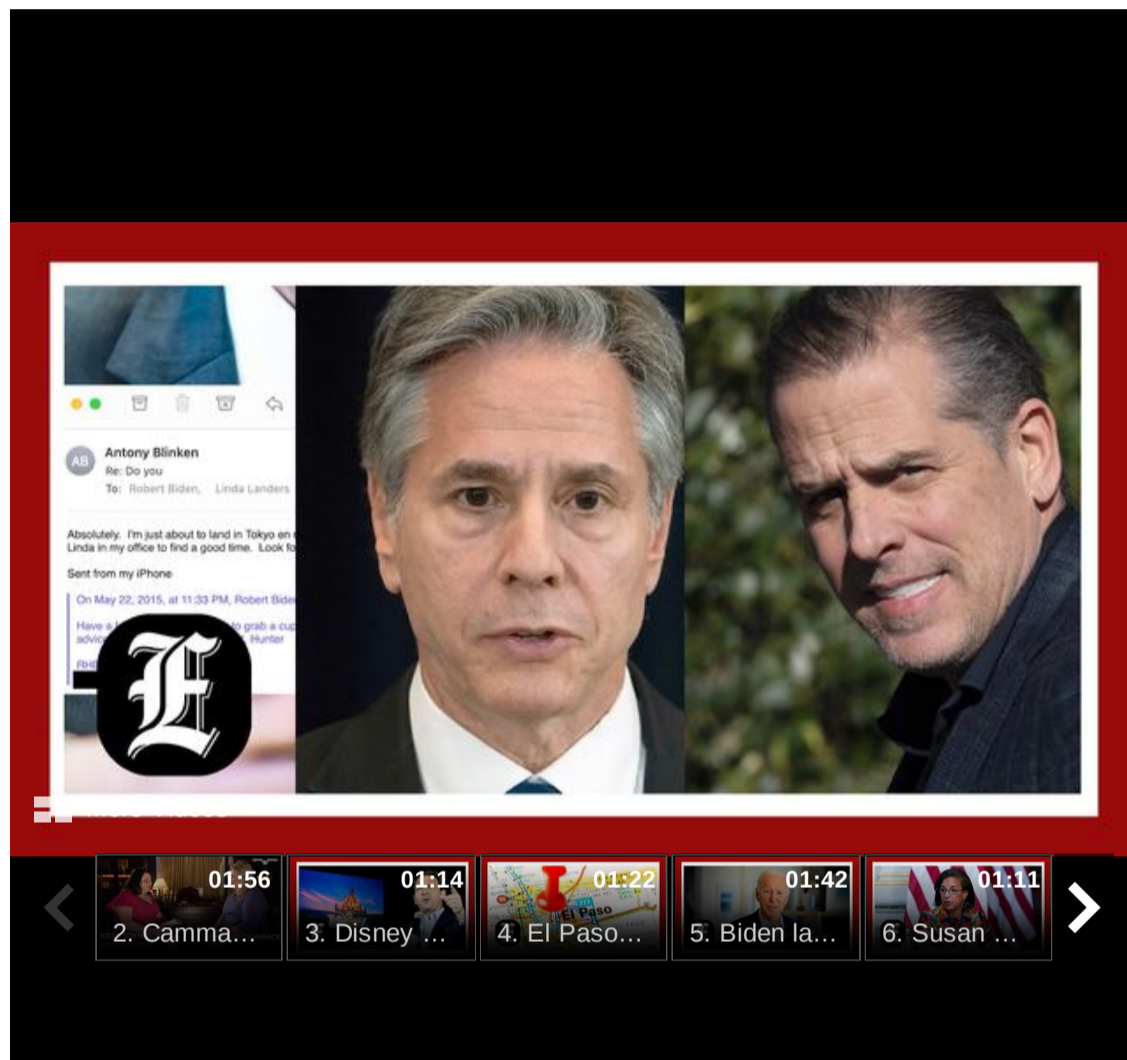
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HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Top Biden agencies hit with subpoenas over social media 'censorship' coordination

by [Gabe Kaminsky](#), Investigative Reporter |

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EXCLUSIVE — Rep. [Jim Jordan](#) (R-OH) sent subpoenas to the heads of three federal agencies Friday in an effort to expose the Biden administration's alleged coordination with [Big Tech](#) and "censorship" of opposing views.

The subpoenas, reviewed by the *Washington Examiner*, were sent to Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), Jen Easterly, who heads the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and James Rubin, coordinator of the Global Engagement Center, a [State Department](#)-housed interagency.

[ALVIN BRAGG DROPS CHALLENGE TO HOUSE GOP SUBPOENA OF FORMER PROSECUTOR](#)

They come as [Republicans](#), including on the House Judiciary Committee and its Weaponization of the Federal Government subcommittee, accelerate efforts to investigate how the Biden administration and [social media](#) companies have remained in close contact regarding content moderation online.

"Freedom of speech is one of the most important rights we have in this country," Jordan, chairman of the [House Judiciary Committee](#), told the *Washington Examiner*. "The collusion between our federal government and Big Tech undermines First Amendment principles and should be investigated."

The Biden administration has continued to come under fire for its efforts to stave off alleged "disinformation," [especially following a series of Washington Examiner reports detailing how the Global Engagement Center](#) funded a group [blacklisting conservative media outlets](#) called the Global Disinformation Index. The "Twitter Files," a series of stories published by Matt Taibbi and other journalists based on internal [Twitter](#) documents and communications, have also revealed how the government under President [Joe Biden](#) repeatedly emailed with employees at the company, such as ex-general counsel [Vijaya Gadde](#), to suggest suppression of certain information.

For instance, the White House urged a Facebook employee in April 2021 to block posts about then-Fox News host [Tucker Carlson](#) alleging there have been efficacy issues with "vaccines," [according](#) to documents obtained by Republican Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry [as part of his lawsuit alleging](#) that the Biden administration violated the First Amendment by demanding content moderation. Moreover, Facebook was informed by the White House in May 2021 that "slowing down" posts appearing as "anti-vax" would be "reasonable," [documents](#) show.

"Numerous documents made publicly available reflect the weaponization of the federal government's power to censor speech online directly and by proxy," Jordan wrote in a Friday letter to Walensky. "It is necessary for Congress to gauge the extent to which the CDC coerced, pressured, worked with, or relied upon social media and other tech companies in order to censor speech."

The subpoena to Walensky comes on the heels of Jordan demanding CDC records in March 2023 showing "communications between the CDC and private companies, internal CDC communications, and communications between the CDC and other third parties discussing content moderation." The subpoena, which was also reviewed by the *Washington Examiner*, asks her to produce the records by May 22 at 9 a.m.

Dr. Rochelle Walensky.
(Greg Nash/Pool via AP)

Easterly and Rubin are also being asked to produce records by that same time. Jordan had similarly demanded records from both CISA and the GEC on March 22 but claims the agencies have failed to turn over any documents.

CISA, an agency under the [Department of Homeland Security](#) that "works with partners to defend against today's threats and collaborate to build a more secure and resilient infrastructure for the future," has also come under fire for its efforts to fight purported disinformation. CISA teamed up from a research standpoint with the Election Integrity Partnership at Stanford University in 2021 on a report finding that the government flagged roughly 4,800 posts to social media companies around the 2020 presidential election, with 35% being labeled, blocked, or removed in some way, the *Intercept* [reported](#) in October 2022.

In addition, Republicans have raised concerns over how CISA's advisory committee in June 2022 drafted a [report](#) calling on the agency to review "social media platforms of all sizes, mainstream media, cable news, hyper-partisan media, talk radio, and other online resources" while shaping the "information ecosystem." CISA announced in a 2021 press release that its 23 committee members included Gadde, University of Washington professor Kate Starbird, and JPMorgan's Chief Information Officer Lori Beer.

"To this end, we have asked for communications between the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), private companies, and other third-party groups such as nonprofit

organizations, in addition to other information," Jordan wrote in his Friday letter to Easterly. "Your response without compulsory process has, to date, been inadequate."

Meanwhile, the GEC, which granted \$100,000 to the Global Disinformation Index in 2021, has reportedly also given money to the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab. That same lab flagged more than 40,000 accounts to Twitter in June 2021 that it alleged were engaged in "inauthentic behavior" boosting Hindu nationalism and a political group in India called the Bharatiya Janata Party, [according](#) to documents published by Taibbi in March.

GEC's prior funding of the Global Disinformation Index has resulted in multiple Republican lawmakers pressing the agency for answers, [including House Oversight and Accountability Committee Chairman James Comer](#) (R-KY).

"Accordingly, and due to the GEC's inadequate voluntary compliance, please find attached a subpoena," Jordan wrote in his subpoena to Rubin, former assistant secretary of state for public affairs in the Clinton administration.

Jordan is demanding the agencies produce records showing "persons" they have "cooperated with, consulted with, or relied on, formally or informally, in developing, applying, executing, implementing, or communicating" government policies in connection to "the moderation, deletion, suppression, restriction, or reduced circulation of content" online.

He also seeks "any agreements and communications" made between the agencies and persons when it comes to content moderation and records showing ways it has allegedly identified "'misinformation,'" "'disinformation,'" or 'malinformation.'"

A spokesperson for the DHS told the *Washington Examiner*: "The Department of Homeland Security does not censor speech and does not request that content be taken down by social media companies."

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"Instead of working with the Department, as numerous committees have done this Congress, the House Judiciary Committee has unnecessarily escalated to a subpoena," said the spokesperson. "DHS will continue cooperating appropriately with Congressional oversight requests, all while faithfully working to protect our nation from terrorism and targeted violence, secure our borders, respond to natural disasters, defend against cyberattacks, and more."

The *Washington Examiner* reached out to the State Department and CDC for comment.

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