



Policy Brief: Dismantle Entities Actively Censoring Americans

By: Wade Miller

Synopsis

The American people have given President Trump a mandate to defang and dismantle woke and weaponized institutions in Washington, D.C. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Justice (DOJ), State Department, and Department of Education remain among the most prominent of these institutions, having openly perpetuated radical ideologies and divisive concepts to wage war on Americans who hold “disfavored” beliefs or belong to so-called “oppressor” groups. However, the list of hostile agencies, departments, and programs that continue to target Americans is far longer and much more deeply rooted than most realize.

The recent focus on the irredeemably corrupt National Endowment for Democracy (NED),¹ a “quasi-independent” non-governmental organization (NGO) that operates as a front for the State Department and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), serves as the tip of the proverbial iceberg for a sprawling censorship industrial complex. The web of this censorship apparatus spans the breadth of the federal government, even including some foreign NGOs like the Global Disinformation Index (GDI),² and works to muzzle populist or citizen-first movements that threaten the established globalist paradigm.

This paper examines the broader censorship ecosystem, assesses the gravity of the threat, identifies key entities of concern, and advocates for specific policy actions in defense of free speech and the constitutional order.

For the sake of our republic and the well-being of the American people, it is imperative that this web be exposed and summarily torn apart. Many of these entities now pose an existential threat to the freedom and security of the very citizens from whom they derive their alleged legitimacy.

¹ CRA Staff. “Primer: The National Endowment for Democracy and an NGO Ecosystem Actively Undermining America”, February 2025, CRA.
²Kaminsky, G. (February 9, 2023). “Disinformation Inc: State Department Bankrolls Group Secretly Blacklisting Conservative Media,” *The Washington Examiner*.
<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/finance/2773271/disinformation-inc-state-department-bankrolls-group-secretly-blacklisting-conservative-media/>

Background: What is the Censorship Industrial Complex?

The phrase “censorship industrial complex” has come to describe the global nexus of governmental, non-profit, and private sector entities that work together to monitor and stifle speech that threatens the elite political and ideological consensus.³ These entities include agencies like the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), tech giants like Meta or Twitter, higher-education affiliated centers like the Stanford Internet Observatory, and non-profits such as Meedan. These organizations are utilizing the strands of institutional power to establish the political, policy, and moral predicate to justify the policing of free expression in a direct threat to foundational God-given rights recognized in the U.S. Constitution.

While the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic provided much of the catalyzing rationale for the widening of this web—censoring speech under the guise of fighting “dis-,” “mis-,” or “malinformation”—the intent and effect was and remains the mitigation of free speech and marginalization of those who share the “wrong” views. The tools utilized to facilitate this censorship ecosystem exist primarily due to “capacity building” efforts abroad. In this context, a useful definition of capacity building is “*the operational and organizational improvement of the federal government’s capabilities that facilitate greater levels of success to accomplish specific missions.*”

Simply put, federal intelligence and security agencies saw success over the decades in running propaganda and censorship campaigns in nations overseas, iterated on those processes, and were then able to cultivate an ecosystem-through partnerships with NGOs and the private sector-that quickly took root at the **domestic** level.

The full scope of this web was not fully grasped by the general public or many policymakers until Elon Musk purchased Twitter (now known as X) and empowered the release of the so-called “Twitter Files” to the public beginning in late 2022.⁴ This resulted in the release of internal memos and communications from inside Twitter and revealed just how complex, established, and *intentional* the effort to censor has become, with much of it funded by American taxpayers.

The Twitter Files revealed that employees at the social media tech giant had actively worked with government officials at the FBI, CISA, and other parts of the Department of Homeland Security to remove specific content or specific users from their platform.⁵ Thousands of Americans were targeted, banned, and silenced by their own government with the aid of private

³ADF Commentary (December 9, 2024). “What is the Censorship Industrial Complex and How Is It Affecting Our Free Speech Rights?,” *Alliance Defending Freedom International*. <https://adfinternational.org/commentary/what-is-censorship-industrial-complex>

⁴Best, P. (December 20, 2022). “Elon Musk Supports Congressional Investigation After Twitter Files Revelations,” *FOX Business*. <https://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/elon-musk-supports-congressional-investigation-twitter-files-revelations>

⁵Davidson, J. (February 7, 2023). “The Twitter Files Reveal An Existential Threat,” *Imprimis*. <https://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/the-twitter-files-reveal-an-existential-threat/>

companies and non-profit organizations. Famous instances include the government-led (and media-arranged) disinformation campaign surrounding the *New York Post*'s reporting on the Hunter Biden laptop in the lead-up to the 2020 election,⁶ as well as the suspension of President Trump's Twitter account.⁷

The relationship between these federal security agencies and private organizations moved far beyond communication into active *coordination* and *collaboration*. The Election Integrity Partnership (EIP), a consortium of entities created at the behest of CISA mere months before the 2020 election, worked to develop "misinformation" response capabilities in real-time.⁸ Operating mostly in the shadows, the EIP included "external stakeholders" such as the Stanford Internet Observatory, Graphika, the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab), and the University of Washington's Center for an Informed Public with the express intent to do what the government on its own did not have the constitutional authority to do: violate the First Amendment rights of its own citizens.⁹

Among the self-stated goals of the EIP was identifying misinformation early before it went viral and flagging prospective policy violations to social media platforms to pressure those platforms to take punitive action against specific users. Alex Stamos, a member of EIP and affiliated at the time with the Stanford Internet Observatory, wrote in an email to a NextDoor employee that the EIP was created "to provide a one-stop shop for local election officials, DHS, and voter protection organizations to report potential disinformation for the EIP to investigate and to refer to the appropriate platforms."¹⁰

This level of sophistication, in which private entities were explicitly tasked by federal security agencies to flag posts, tweets, and other online commentary from American citizens to be passed on to various social media companies, resulted in widespread violations of Americans' First Amendment rights. One of the more common actions taken was so-called "shadowbans," where individuals who shared the "wrong" views had their accounts algorithmically suppressed in other users' feeds in an attempt to prevent certain opinions or material from reaching wider audiences. In other instances, the censorship machine targeted individuals and entities with suspensions or outright platform bans—including Twitter's suspension of the *New York Post*'s account following their accurate reporting on the Hunter Biden laptop scandal.¹¹

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Interim Staff Report (June 26, 2023). "The Weaponization of CISA: How a "Cybersecurity" Agency Colluded With Big Tech and "Disinformation" Partners to Censor Americans," *House Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government*.

<https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/cisa-staff-report6-26-23.pdf>

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Interim Staff Report (November 6, 2023). "The Weaponization of "Disinformation" Pseudo-Experts and Bureaucrats: How the Federal Government Partnered with Universities to Censor Americans' Political Speech," *House Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government*. Pg. 38

¹¹Nava, V., Garger, K., and Golding, B. (December 2, 2022). "Hunter Biden Laptop Bombshell: Twitter Invented Reason to Censor Post's Reporting," *The New York Post*. <https://nypost.com/2022/12/02/elon-musk-releases-twitters-files-on-censorship-of-post/>

Other topics flagged by these entities as “disinformation” or “misinformation” resulting in censorship or de-platforming included the origins of COVID-19, doubts over the safety and efficacy of the vaccines,¹² skepticism of mail-in voting protocols and ballot harvesting, suspicions of voter fraud, and questioning the media narrative surrounding January 6th.¹³ Unsurprisingly, the views and positions flagged by the EIP were overwhelmingly held by political conservatives concerned about the narratives being proffered by the government and political elites. Some media outlets like the left-wing Tech Policy Press have defended the mass de-platforming of tens of thousands of Americans as “effective in reducing various online harms.”¹⁴

Importantly, these tyrannical activities by the EIP were completely intertwined with CISA under an operating paradigm designed to have all involved entities acting as a single unit. Congressional investigators uncovered that the project included over 100 students, including at least four who were employed by CISA and routinely coordinated and communicated with senior CISA personnel like Brian Scully regarding its censorship activities.¹⁵

Perhaps most alarming, however, is the dramatic change in CISA’s disclaimers to social media companies. CISA initially issued disclaimers to these companies after flagging specific posts or comments stating that “such a request was not a requirement or demand” and that CISA “would not take any action, favorable or unfavorable, based on decisions about whether or not to respond” to a particular flag. Within just two months of the EIP’s creation, the agency began adding a bone-chilling addendum that, “This information may also be shared with law enforcement or intelligence agencies.”¹⁶

This disclaimer served as both an unspoken intimidation tactic against companies like Twitter and Facebook while also acting as a legal attempt to inoculate the agency from prospective lawsuits should its activities be discovered. But the effect on companies was clear: while CISA itself may not retaliate against the company, there was no such guarantee from the FBI or NSA, who routinely informed these companies when they had received a “misinformation” report.¹⁷

By laundering its illicit and unconstitutional efforts against American citizens to outside entities, the CISA bureaucracy revealed the true danger that they and the censorship regime pose to the

¹²Children’s Health Defense Team (August 18, 2022). “Without Warning, Facebook, Instagram, De-Platform Children’s Health Defense Accounts,” *The Defender*. <https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/facebook-instagram-de-platform-chd-childrens-health-defense-accounts/>

¹³Miller, G. and Hendrix, J. (June 5, 2024). “Deplatforming Accounts After the January 6th Insurrection at the U.S. Capitol Reduced Misinformation on Twitter,” *Tech Policy Press*.

<https://www.techpolicy.press/deplatforming-accounts-after-the-january-6th-insurrection-at-the-us-capitol-reduced-misinformation-on-twitter/>

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Interim Staff Report (November 6, 2023). “The Weaponization of “Disinformation” Pseudo-Experts and Bureaucrats: How the Federal Government Partnered with Universities to Censor Americans’ Political Speech,” *House Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government*. Pg. 44

¹⁶*Ibid.* pg. 15

¹⁷*Ibid.* pg. 16

American people. The release of the Twitter Files served as an act of immensely consequential courage that opened the eyes of the public to the full weaponization of their own government against them and spurred numerous significant congressional investigations exposing the extent of this nefarious censorship regime.

One of the many investigations that followed in the wake of the Twitter Files revealed that the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was one of the key facilitators of the censorship industrial complex through the funneling of grant dollars to a British anti-speech organization called the Global Disinformation Index (GDI).¹⁸

A *Washington Examiner* report showed that GDI had taken significant grant funding from both NED and the State Department's Global Engagement Center (GEC) to target the top ten "riskiest" news outlets in the United States. Unsurprisingly, all of these outlets were among the largest conservative and right-leaning publications.¹⁹ GDI flagged these conservative platforms as epicenters of "disinformation" in an attempt to dry up their advertising dollars and permanently discredit them.

As former State Department official, Mike Benz has argued, "There's an elegant structure to it [the censorship industrial complex], which is that the government pays the civil society institutions to do essentially CIA work against our own citizens."²⁰ According to Benz, these agencies and groups justify their censorship operations because "There's been a redefinition of democracy from meaning the consensus of individuals to meaning the consensus of institutions."²¹ Therefore, any political movement or politician that opposes the agenda of these globalist institutions is, by way of this new standard, a "threat to democracy."

A critical component of this structure is the nearly 100 university-sponsored and taxpayer-funded "Disinformation Labs" that have been stood up over the last several years. A partial list of the universities that have worked or continue to work alongside the federal government to silence or censor Americans include Stanford University,²² Northeastern University,²³ the University of

¹⁸Kaminsky, G. (February 9, 2023). "Disinformation Inc: State Department Bankrolls Group Secretly Blacklisting Conservative Media," *The Washington Examiner*.
<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/finance/2773271/disinformation-inc-state-department-bankrolls-group-secretly-blacklisting-conservative-media/>

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Mike Benz Interview (August 28, 2024). "The Deep State's Step-by-Step Plan to End Free Speech," *The Tucker Carlson Show*.
<https://tuckercarlson.com/tucker-show-mike-benz-2>

²¹*Ibid.*

²²Menn, J. (June 14, 2024). "Stanford's Top Disinformation Research Group Collapses Under Pressure," *The Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/06/14/stanford-internet-observatory-disinformation-research-lawsuits-politics/>

²³Psychology of Misinformation Lab (Accessed January 2, 2025). "Research Overview," *Northeastern University*.
<https://www.networkscienceinstitute.org/pomlab/research>

Pittsburgh,²⁴ George Washington University,²⁵ the University of Texas,²⁶ and the University of Washington.²⁷

Many of the universities and non-profits that participate in this anti-speech ecosystem receive funding from American taxpayers. Whether it's the federal student loan program or grants doled out through the National Science Foundation (NSF), these higher education institutions and anti-speech nonprofits routinely seek out and receive taxpayer-provided resources for the specific purpose of censoring the taxpayers funding them. The NSF, in particular, disperses taxpayer-funded grants to well-connected or government-preferred entities that maintain close relationships with the federal bureaucracy. Beginning in 2021, the NSF allocated \$39 million to the Trust & Authenticity in Communication Systems program to fund projects to “address issues of trust and authenticity in communication systems, including predicting, preventing, detecting, correcting, and mitigating the spread of inaccurate information that harms people and society.”²⁸ Among the recipients of these funds include Meedan, a nonprofit developing technology to censor “misinformation” online at scale.²⁹

A recent report shows that the Biden administration has spent at least \$267 million of taxpayer funds to award grants to combat “misinformation” since 2021.³⁰ This includes at least \$127 million to advocate for COVID-related public health guidelines in the face of alleged “COVID misinformation.”³¹

Yet, despite the increasing exposure of their illicit and often nefarious activities, the desire to expand this censorship industrial complex remains deeply rooted in many of the agencies and organizations that have participated and continue to participate in these efforts. This was made clear in 2022 when President Biden's Department of Homeland Security announced its intention to launch the short-lived Disinformation Governance Board to “counter misinformation and disinformation.”³² The federal department tasked with protecting citizens from external and internal security threats brazenly announced that it was going to devote a portion of its taxpayer-provided resources to determine what was “wrongthink” in public discourse.

²⁴Institute for Cyber Law, Policy, and Security (Accessed January 2, 2025). “Pitt Disinformation Lab Events,” *University of Pittsburgh*. <https://www.cyber.pitt.edu/pitt-disinformation-lab-events>

²⁵Institute for Data, Democracy & Politics (October 31, 2024). “Shoves, Nudges, and Combating Misinformation: Evidence on a New Approach,” *George Washington University*. <https://iddp.gwu.edu/shoves-nudges-and-combating-misinformation-evidence-new-approach>

²⁶Global DisInformation Lab (Accessed January 2, 2025). “Mizaru: Acceptance of Climate Disinformation,” *The University of Texas*. <https://gdil.org/projects-2/mizaru/>

²⁷Information School (Accessed January 2, 2025). “Center for an Informed Public,” *The University of Washington*. <https://ischool.uw.edu/research/center-informed-public/>

²⁸Interim Staff Report (February 5, 2024). “The Weaponization of the National Science Foundation: How NSF Is Funding the Development of Automated Tools to Censor Online Speech “At Scale” and Trying to Cover Up Its Actions,” *House Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government*. https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/NSF-Staff-Report_Appendix.pdf

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰Substack Post (November 22, 2024). “Taxpayer Funded Censorship: How Government Is Using Your Tax Dollars to Silence Your Voice,” *Open the Books*. <https://openthebooks.substack.com/p/taxpayer-funded-censorship-how-government>

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Johnson, B. (April 27, 2022). “DHS Standing Up Disinformation Governance Board Led by Information Warfare Expert,” *Homeland Security Today*. <https://www.hstoday.us/federal-pages/dhs/dhs-standing-up-disinformation-governance-board-led-by-information-warfare-expert/>

And while the board was ostensibly “disbanded” after massive blowback—including revelations that its designated leader, Nina Jankowicz, had herself engaged in pushing disinformation regarding the Russia collusion hoax³³—the attempt to create something akin to an Orwellian Ministry of Truth suggests dark intentions from those involved in the censorship industrial complex.

The fallout from the release of the Twitter Files and investigations by Congress, media organizations like the *Washington Examiner*, and organizations like the Foundation for Freedom Online has further revealed the scope of the censorship industrial complex. The complicity of non-governmental organizations like NED and the State Department’s “defunct” GEC in conjunction with private entities such as Graphika and Meedan are illustrative of the belief that there is a future for this kind of deeply tyrannical and anti-American industry.

Further, the participation and complicity of multiple major federal departments and agencies suggest that the censorship threat is broad and deeply rooted within the federal bureaucracy. The Department of Homeland Security, State Department, National Science Foundation, and security agencies like the FBI, NSA, and CISA willingly participated and strategized on ways to silence the speech and ideas of the citizens they are supposed to serve. The damage is done. The remedy is a dedicated effort to totally dismantle this censorship ecosystem: an effort that must be swift and uncompromising if trust in America’s institutions is ever to be restored.

Policy Approach: Dismantling the Web of Censorship

In recent weeks, there has been some seeming rollback of the censorship industrial complex in response to President Trump’s second term. The State Department announced that the Global Engagement Center (GEC) closed down its operations on December 23, 2024, after its authorization expired.³⁴ Closer analysis suggests that the department intends to merely shuffle GEC employees to a different entity known as the Counter Foreign Information Manipulation & Interference office (R/FIMI).³⁵ Unsurprisingly, the new agency’s own description claims it is designed to invigorate “a network of U.S. interagency, international, and private sector partners that decisively exposes and counters disinformation and propaganda.”³⁶

Further, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced in early January 2025 that the tech company formerly known as Facebook was ending its third-party fact-checking program of its users and

³³Moore, M. (May 10, 2022). “DHS Disinformation ‘Czar’ Jankowicz Pushed Trump-Russia Claims at Center of Durham Case,” *The New York Post*. <https://nypost.com/2022/05/10/dhs-disinformation-czar-jankowicz-pushed-trump-russia-claims/>

³⁴Weed, M. (December 26, 2024). “Termination of the State Department’s Global Engagement Center,” *Congressional Research Service*. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN12475>

³⁵Nava, V. (January 2, 2025). “Biden Admin ‘Rebranding’ State Department’s Controversial Global Engagement Center Under New Name—With Same Employees: Report,” *The New York Post*.

<https://nypost.com/2025/01/02/us-news/biden-admin-rebranding-state-depts-shuttered-gec-under-new-name-with-same-staff-report/>

³⁶Taibbi, M. (January 10, 2025). “State Department Defies Congress, Revives Infamous Censorship Office in Absurd Prank,” *Racket News*. https://www.racket.news/p/state-department-defies-congress?r=5mz1&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web

claimed, “We’re going to get back to our roots and focus on reducing mistakes, simplifying our policies, and restoring free expression on our platforms.”³⁷ Meta, like Twitter prior to its buyout by Elon Musk, also worked hand-in-glove with federal security agencies to silence and censor Americans in the name of “combating misinformation.”³⁸

This all follows in the wake of the collapse of the Stanford Internet Observatory over the summer of 2024, which shuffled its remaining personnel into another university department following ongoing legal battles over its role in censoring American citizens.

However, given the scope of the illicit and unapologetically destructive activities of these entities—as well as the stakes—the baseline policy stance from both congressional lawmakers and administration officials must be an aggressive and unapologetic campaign to fully dismantle and defund the entire censorship ecosystem.

Entity: National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

Status: Non-governmental organization funded by the Department of State

Actions: 1.) Zero out all funding.

Rationale: Setting aside NED’s complicity in fomenting conflict abroad that is not in the U.S. national interest,³⁹ there are numerous censorship-related reasons to zero out NED’s funding:

- NED is fully complicit in utilizing taxpayer resources to fund campaigns aimed at censoring American citizens and blacklisting conservative media organizations in order to tilt elections in favor of progressive outcomes.⁴⁰ The Endowment made grants worth \$545,000 during the 2020 election cycle and the height of COVID propaganda to the Global Disinformation Index (GDI). GDI used those U.S. taxpayer funds to censor American citizens and conservative political organizations.⁴¹
- NED has abandoned its transparent grantmaking process and, for the last three years, has mostly obfuscated its grant recipients from the American public. It is a curiosity that this decision to mask its grants from the public occurred after its role in censoring Americans. This sudden divestment from transparency has only increased concerns that NED is funneling taxpayer resources to entities that are dragging Americans into conflicts abroad and that seek to censor the very citizens who fund the organization.
- The current CEO and President of NED, Damon Wilson, helped found the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab).⁴² The DFRLab is one of the four

³⁷Kaplan, J. (January 7, 2025). “More Speech and Fewer Mistakes,” *Meta*. <https://about.fb.com/news/2025/01/meta-more-speech-fewer-mistakes/>

³⁸Holland, M. (January 10, 2025). “We Were Censored by Meta; We’re Taking Them to the Supreme Court,” *RealClearPolitics*. https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2025/01/10/we_were_censored_by_meta_were_taking_them_to_the_supreme_court_152179.html

³⁹CRA Staff. “Primer: The National Endowment for Democracy and an NGO Ecosystem Actively Undermining America”, February 2025, CRA.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹Benz, M., Bokhari, A., and FFO Staff (November 27, 2024). “2024 Censorship Index: The U.S. Government’s Programs for Information Control,” *Foundation for Freedom Online*. <https://foundationforfreedomonline.com/the-censorship-logs-us-government-censorship-empire/>

⁴²*Ibid.*

main pillars of the Election Integrity Partnership, complicit in the censorship of American citizens during the 2020 election cycle and the height of COVID propaganda.⁴³

Entity: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

Status: Agency within the Department of Homeland Security

Actions: 1.) Prohibit the agency from engaging in, participating, or monitoring any activity related to “dis-, mis-, or malinformation;” 2.) Terminate and prosecute all personnel involved in the EIP; 3.) Permanently revoke security clearances for all personnel involved in the EIP; 4.) Significant across-the-board funding cuts; 5.) Statutory implementation of an immediate sunset/agency termination trigger if CISA is found to engage in censorship of American citizens

Rationale: The core reason that the agency must face severe consequences is its central involvement in attacking the First Amendment rights of Americans:

- The agency created the Election Integrity Partnership, a consortium of entities assembled before the 2020 election that worked to develop “misinformation” response capabilities in real-time, resulting in the unprecedented mass censorship of American citizens.
- CISA engaged in the “most massive attack against free speech in United States’ history,” according to the United States District Judge Terry Doughty, who served as the trial judge in *Missouri v. Biden*.⁴⁴

Entity: Global Engagement Center (GEC)/Counter Foreign Information Manipulation & Interference Office (R/FIMI)

Status: Office within the Department of State

Actions: 1.) Following its fake closure, prohibit personnel transfer and future rebranding; 2.) Statutory prohibition on the State Department creating a new entity such as R/FIMI or retooling an existing entity that engaged in similar activities to the GEC; 3.) Terminate and prosecute all former GEC and current R/FIMI employees involved in censoring American citizens.

Rationale: There are numerous reasons that the Center should remain abolished and that a prospective rebranding must be prohibited:

- The Center was established to counter foreign state and non-state propaganda, however, it turned its sights on American citizens during the 2020 election cycle with a \$100,000 grant to the infamous Global Disinformation Index (GDI).⁴⁵ GDI blacklisted conservative media sites, labeling the top ten “riskiest” news outlets in the United States as the *American Spectator*, *Newsmax*, *The Federalist*, *The American Conservative*, *One*

⁴³Interim Staff Report (November 6, 2023). “The Weaponization of “Disinformation” Pseudo-Experts and Bureaucrats: How the Federal Government Partnered with Universities to Censor Americans’ Political Speech,” *House Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government*.

https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/EIP_Jira-Ticket-Staff-Report-11-7-23-Clean.pdf

⁴⁴Judge Terry Doughty, United States District Court (July 4, 2023). “Memorandum Ruling on Request for Preliminary Injunction,” *Missouri v. Biden*. <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.lawd.189520/gov.uscourts.lawd.189520.293.0.pdf#page=2>

⁴⁵Kaminsky, G. (February 9, 2023). “Disinformation Inc: State Department Bankrolls Group Secretly Blacklisting Conservative Media,” *The Washington Examiner*. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/finance/2773271/disinformation-inc-state-department-bankrolls-group-secretly-blacklisting-conservative-media/>

*America News, The Blaze, The Daily Wire, RealClearPolitics, Reason, and The New York Post.*⁴⁶ GDI flagged these conservative and right-leaning publications as top “disinformation” sites to corporate publications in an attempt to dry up advertising dollars and blacklist them. This effort was undertaken utilizing both NED and Global Engagement Center grants derived from taxpayer funds.

- The Center is currently the reason that the State Department is subject to two lawsuits claiming First Amendment violations: *Missouri v. Biden* and *Daily Wire, LLC v. United States Department of State*. In the former suit, plaintiffs allege that the Center engaged in both direct and indirect (via the Election Integrity Partnership) communications with social media companies to censor American citizens during the 2020 election. In the latter suit, plaintiffs allege that the Center funded GDI with taxpayer money to blacklist and dry up advertising dollars from conservative media outlets.⁴⁷
- The Center obfuscated and hid its role in targeting American citizens. Specifically, the Center’s Principal Deputy Coordinator refused to answer congressional inquiries regarding its partnership with organizations like GDI, which sought to blacklist and censor American conservatives, as to whether or not it had ever identified U.S. citizens or groups as purveyors of “disinformation,” and what work it has done with the Election Integrity Partnership.⁴⁸

Entity: Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy: Bureau of Global Public Affairs

Status: Office within the Department of State

Actions: 1.) At minimum, a blanket freeze on the Bureau’s ability to issue grants. 2.) Initiate an investigation by a special counsel regarding the Bureau’s ongoing funding to entities engaged in censorship campaigns both overseas and domestically.

Rationale: The Bureau has steered taxpayer funds to myriad censorship efforts abroad with significant ramifications for American citizens at home.

- The Bureau funded “fact-checking” organizations in Brazil aimed at delegitimizing populist political entities, including at least six grants worth \$233,000 to the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism (Abraji).⁴⁹
- The Bureau steered \$78,000 to Arizona State University in the lead-up to the 2020 elections and at the height of COVID propaganda to “map and analyze public awareness of disinformation threats through an intelligence dashboard and propose actionable policy recommendations.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷Committee Letter to Secretary Blinken (July 2, 2024). “McCaul, Mast, Issa Send Letter Expressing Concerns with GEC Reauthorization,” *House Committee on Foreign Affairs*.
<https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/mccaul-mast-issa-send-letter-expressing-concerns-with-gec-reauthorization/#>

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹Federal Grants Search (Accessed December 19, 2024). “Abraji Prime Award Results,” *USASpending.Gov*.
<https://www.usaspending.gov/search/?hash=bcae26c20dba71eb69ccea17c47b6e2f9>

⁵⁰Federal Grants Search (Accessed December 19, 2024). “Arizona State University Project Grant,” *USASpending.Gov*.
https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_SBE50020GR0018_1900

- The Bureau issued a \$300,000 grant to the globalist Atlantic Council to “build a Transatlantic response to disinformation and partner with local organizations to reach relevant audiences.”⁵¹ Damon Wilson, the former Executive Vice President of the Atlantic Council, is the current President of the corrupt National Endowment for Democracy and helped found the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab). The DFRLab is one of the four main pillars of the Election Integrity Partnership, complicit in the censorship of American citizens during the 2020 election cycle and the height of COVID propaganda.⁵²
- The Bureau provided a \$30,000 grant to a far-left censorship organization called Media Literacy Now, which advocates for state mandates to fight “misinformation” through “media literacy training.” This grant provided 11 training seminars from June 2021 to April 2022 to roughly 700 U.S. schoolteachers. These seminars were overseen by German “disinformation activists” who helped train American teachers to “inoculate” students against disinformation—primarily from conservative sources.⁵³

Entity: The National Science Foundation (NSF)

Status: Federal grantmaking agency

Actions: 1.) Prohibit all grants to entities engaged in censorship activities or for the purpose of monitoring, combating, or mitigating “dis-, mis-, or malinformation.” 2.) Terminate all personnel involved in approving such grants.

Rationale: The foundation dispersed nearly \$40 million to universities and nonprofits for the express and explicit purpose of censoring Americans.⁵⁴ It is, in many ways, the primary funding mechanism for the censorship industrial complex, serving as the glue within the larger ecosystem between government and nonprofit entities.

In addition, there are numerous entities that have partnered with the federal government to censor their fellow Americans and suppress information. These NGOs, nonprofits, and research organizations have all received significant federal funding through the federal grantmaking process. As such, their taxpayer-backed funding pipeline must come to a screeching halt, followed by sustained investigations from both Congress and the Department of Justice.

⁵¹Federal Grants Search (Accessed December 19, 2024). “Atlantic Council Cooperative Agreement,” *USASpending.Gov*. https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_SBE30019CA0012_1900

⁵²Interim Staff Report (November 6, 2023). “The Weaponization of “Disinformation” Pseudo-Experts and Bureaucrats: How the Federal Government Partnered with Universities to Censor Americans’ Political Speech,” *House Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government*. https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-sites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/EIP_Jira-Ticket-Staff-Report-11-7-23-Clean.pdf

⁵³Rosiak, L. (January 9, 2024). “State Department Paid Germans to Bring Censorship and Propaganda to U.S. Schools,” *The Daily Wire*. <https://www.dailywire.com/news/state-department-paid-germans-to-bring-censorship-and-propaganda-to-u-s-schools>

⁵⁴Interim Staff Report (February 5, 2024). “The Weaponization of the National Science Foundation: How NSF Is Funding the Development of Automated Tools to Censor Online Speech “At Scale” and Trying to Cover Up Its Actions,” *House Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government*. <https://www.house.gov/committees/judiciary>

Entity: Graphika

Status: Social network analysis company

Actions: 1.) Prohibit all future federal grants to the company. 2.) Launch a Department of Justice investigation into prospective civil rights violations.

Rationale: Graphika was one of the four “external partners” of the EIP created by CISA to censor Americans in the lead-up to the 2020 presidential elections. The organization has received over \$6.6 million in federal contracts from the Department of Defense since 2019.⁵⁵

Entity: The Center for an Informed Public

Status: University-backed research organization (University of Washington)

Actions: 1.) Prohibit all future federal grants to the Center. 2.) Launch a Department of Justice investigation into prospective civil rights violations.

Rationale: The Center is led by radical progressive professor Kate Starbird and is complicit in domestic censorship campaigns against American citizens,⁵⁶ working closely with the Election Integrity Partnership that censored the flow of information and Americans’ speech during the 2020 elections.⁵⁷ The Center has received at least \$2 million in funding from the National Science Foundation.⁵⁸

Entity: Meedan

Status: Nonprofit

Actions: 1.) Prohibit all future federal grants to the organization. 2.) Launch a Department of Justice investigation into prospective civil rights violations.

Rationale: Meedan is an emerging nonprofit that is developing technologies to censor “misinformation.”⁵⁹ Specifically, Meedan has received at least \$5.7 million in funding from the National Science Foundation.⁶⁰

Entity: Digital Forensic Research Lab

Status: Research arm of the Atlantic Council

Actions: 1.) Prohibit all future federal grants to the organization. 2.) Launch a Department of Justice investigation into prospective civil rights violations.

⁵⁵Federal Grants Search (Accessed December 19, 2024). “Octant Data, LLC Award Results,” *USASpending.Gov*.
<https://www.usaspending.gov/search/?hash=1fc120e3c166fd4ef308d9147819c3b5>

⁵⁶Bliss, N., Starbird, K., et al (2020). “An Agenda for Disinformation Research,” *Computing Community Consortium*.
<https://cra.org/ccc/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/An-agenda-for-disinformation-research.pdf>

⁵⁷Transcript: Interview of Kate Starbird (June 6, 2023). “Judiciary Republicans Release Kate Starbird Transcript,” *House Judiciary Committee*.
https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/Starbird%20Transcript_Redacted_Errata.pdf

⁵⁸FFO Staff (December 13, 2023). “Kate Starbird: ‘Freedom of Speech’ Should Not Be Centered Because A ‘Level Playing Field’ For Ideas Is ‘Tilted in Favor of Misinformation,’” *Foundation for Freedom Online*.
<https://foundationforfreedomonline.com/kate-starbird-freedom-speech-favors-misinformation/?swcfcpc=1>

⁵⁹Lynch, J. (February 7, 2024). “Meedan Views Distrusting Mainstream Media as ‘Misinformation,’ Report Finds,” *The Daily Caller*.
<https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/07/national-science-foundation-distrust-mainstream-media-misinformation-meedan/>

⁶⁰Award Profile (Accessed December 10, 2024). “Contract to Meedan,” *USASpending.Gov*.
https://www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT_AWD_49100421C0035_4900_-NONE_-NONE-

Rationale: The brainchild of the Atlantic Council and Damon Wilson, this organization actively participated in efforts to censor American citizens during the 2020 elections.⁶¹

Entity: NewsGuard

Status: Private company

Actions: 1.) Prohibit all future federal grants/contracts to the organization. 2.) Launch a Department of Justice investigation into prospective civil rights violations.

Rationale: NewsGuard is a private company that purports to be politically neutral while rating news sites according to subjective criteria. Further, the organization is designed to suppress sites with low ratings and steer readers to government-approved sites.⁶² Unsurprisingly, the company rates conservative sites lower than progressive news sources and has received Department of Defense funding.⁶³

Beyond the entities outlined above, other burgeoning organizations deserve heightened scrutiny as part of the censorship industrial complex. These include the American Sunlight Project,⁶⁴ a 501(c)(4) run by Nina Jankowicz, disgraced former head of DHS's short-lived Disinformation Governance Board as well as the Center for Democracy and Technology, a nonprofit that, among other policies, advocates for countering disinformation.⁶⁵

Conclusion

The censorship industrial complex is not a monolith, but rather a web of various strands within the federal bureaucracy and outside of it that have worked in tandem to censor and silence political ideas and movements at odds with the prevailing elite consensus. The censorship industrial complex is perhaps best understood as a terrifying Orwellian infrastructure, weaponized by the radical Left against an American people that they see more as subjects to be ruled than citizens to be served.

The entities that make it up are currently at war with the fundamental American idea that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. The common link among these organizations and institutions and people is adherence to a secular, progressive

⁶¹Interim Staff Report (November 6, 2023). "The Weaponization of "Disinformation" Pseudo-Experts and Bureaucrats: How the Federal Government Partnered with Universities to Censor Americans' Political Speech," *House Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government*.

https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/EIP_Jira-Ticket-Staff-Report-11-7-23-Clean.pdf

⁶²FFO Staff (May 31, 2024). "Censorship Profile: NewsGuard," *Foundation for Freedom Online*.

<https://foundationforfreedomonline.com/censorship-profile-newsguard/>

⁶³Federal Grants Search (Accessed December 19, 2024). "NewsGuard Technologies Inc. Award Results," *USASpending.Gov*.

https://www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT_AWD_FA864921P1569_9700_-NONE_-NONE-

⁶⁴American Sunlight Project (Accessed January 6, 2025). "Team Page," *American Sunlight Project*. <https://www.americansunlight.org/team>

⁶⁵Adler, W. and Jain, S. (September 21, 2023). "Seismic Shifts: How Economic, Technological, and Political Trends Are Challenging Independent Counter-Election-Disinformation Initiatives in the United States," *Center for Democracy & Technology*.

<https://cdt.org/insights/seismic-shifts-how-economic-technological-and-political-trends-are-challenging-independent-counter-election-disinformation-initiatives-in-the-united-states/>

ideology that seeks to destroy and replace the foundational American ethos with one untethered to the nation's constitutional order.

The open question is whether these entities can be successfully reformed in a way that ensures that their nefarious actions can never again be used against the very people they are supposed to serve. There are good arguments that the United States should possess the capabilities of these entities as part of its broader statecraft arsenal to advance America's national interests and diminish her enemies. Yet, it remains to be seen whether or not it is even possible to fully defang the progressive orthodoxy in these agencies without dismantling them and starting over.

It may very well be the case that there is no other choice but to take it all down. As the popular fictional character Captain America quipped upon learning the full extent of his government's corruption, "S.H.I.E.L.D. HYDRA. It all goes."

Therefore, the future freedom and well-being of the citizenry is reliant, in large part, on the elimination of this censorship complex as a direct threat to the American people. The Trump administration and its allies in Congress must, at a minimum, dismantle the existing censorship infrastructure within the federal agencies—and they should do so without hesitation or delay.