

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader  
Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
CPAC Subcommittee Hearing  
“Mainstreaming Extremism: Social Media’s Role in Radicalizing America.”  
September 24, 2020**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Good morning and welcome to our hearing focused on social media.

As with any disruptive technology, the Internet certainly has its faults, especially when platforms are used to cause real harm, especially if companies are not fulfilling their responsibilities.

However, I hope we all recognize how the Internet is still an overwhelming force for good, especially in these challenging times.

It gives Americans a platform for their voices to be heard.

It keeps us connected to our loved ones.

It offers unprecedented access to information and unlimited opportunities for innovation.

So, I appreciate our witnesses for being here today to share how we can strive for a better and safer Internet for all.

Freedom of Speech is central to American democracy.

It’s what sets us apart from nearly every other nation on Earth.

And yet, this bedrock principle is increasingly under attack.

Free speech is not an absolute, and there are certainly exceptions...like when it comes to physically harming others or one’s self.

However, I’m extremely concerned when platforms apply inconsistent content moderating policies for their own purposes, whether as an excuse to take responsibility for failing to enforce content standards fairly or by altering speech to settle scores with political or competitive opponents.

There is no clearer example of a platform using its power for political purposes than Twitter singling out President Trump while **also** leaving blatant threats of violence by activists, Democratic candidates, and authoritarian foreign leaders untouched.

Twitter's rules say they are intended to ensure ALL people can participate in public conversation freely and safely.

But that's not what we are seeing.

To further its leadership's political agenda, Twitter has instead embraced an inconsistent application of its standards.

For political speech we disagree with, the answer should not be censorship; the answer should **always be** more speech.

And, for harmful speech, it should be removed, regardless of the political leanings of the speaker or the moderator.

Sadly, Twitter has fallen well short in encouraging healthy discourse online.

For the record, the following are blue checkmark tweets and accounts that exist on Twitter today.

Unlike President Trump, they haven't been fact-checked or tagged for violation of standards by @Jack.

The World Health Organization shared this propaganda from the CCP, quote: "Preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel #coronavirus."

That's False.

Another example is a well-known online activist on the Left who has repeatedly doxxed and falsely accused innocent people of heinous crimes.

Like falsely accusing a Texas state trooper of rape.

He also accused an innocent man of murdering a 7-year old girl.

Death threats were sent to the man's family... and he ultimately took his own life.

This online activist also used Twitter to threaten the lives of innocent police officers in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Twitter said this didn't violate their standards.

This tweet is word-for-word from a candidate challenging Republican Congressman Brian Mast.

She tweeted; I quote:

“is that really the new rule they want? Killing is okay if it's a bad guy? Is it now **open season** on... Trump... Barr... Kavanaugh... Pompeo” end quote.

Can you imagine if the President or **any** Republican said that about Democrats? My only hope is the Secret Service took this threat more seriously than Jack.

These are only a few examples of blatant hypocrisy by Twitter.

**Bottomline:** Twitter continues to tag the President's tweets with increased frequency as we approach the election, BUT...

... they've ignored violent threats against Republicans...

... allowed for propaganda pushed by the Chinese Communist Party...

... tolerated doxxing... and the incitement of violence against police officers...

... and also left clear threats by the Supreme Leader of Iran go unchallenged.

This doesn't add up, and it doesn't build trust in the fair enforcement of Twitter's content standards.

It begs the question-- What is the point of their terms of services and content policies if Jack intentionally applies them differently depending on who the user is?

Is Twitter a fair and safe platform for free speech and the battle of ideas, or a platform where content bias is acceptable as long as it influences the election in favor of the political whims of the woke mob?

If the Majority is truly concerned about platforms having an effect on the upcoming election, I hope they will join me in demanding accountability from this platform that is blatantly putting its thumb on the scale for one side over the other.