

Congressman W. Gregory Steube

Statement for the Record

Committee on the Judiciary

U.S. House of Representatives

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Mr. Chairman, today I express my opposition of the majority's report on "Competition in Digital Markets." It contains numerous proposals that would harm the American economy, and it relies on biased and at times anonymous sources. The report was put together exclusively by Democrats and their staff. I specifically want to focus on how the report fails to properly address the growing threat of online censorship from Big Tech platforms.

The American people should all demand equal treatment, especially in the public square. Our country's founding and entire system of government prides itself on our ability for citizens to have different views without being suppressed or censored. Both Twitter and Facebook have indefinitely suspended President Trump's accounts from their platforms, marking unprecedented censorship measures. In addition, both platforms, as well as Google and Amazon, have removed thousands of conservative users. However, Big Tech did not take similar actions during riots last summer, or even against international bad actors like Iranian Ayatollah Khamenei. Furthermore, Google, Amazon and Apple have all restricted access to Parler in their respective App Stores and on the Cloud. Parler has been one platform that has repeatedly expressed its commitment to free speech and refused to censor speech online on a partisan basis.

The majority's report does not address these issues, even though there is an easy fix for them: amending Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. Properly crafted reforms could fix the issue of online censorship while still leaving the bulk of the protections afforded in Section 230 in place. To this end, I introduced the CASE-IT Act which would distinguish between "Big Tech" and "Small Tech" by employing a market dominance test and then require market dominant firms to adhere to a First Amendment standard. There are other Section 230 reform bills that would achieve complementary goals. It is this type of reform that any report on Big Tech and antitrust should focus on.

I urge my colleagues to consider Section 230 reforms and oppose the majority's report.