

CISA Censorship Is ‘Most Insidious Attack on American Democracy’



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West Virginia Secretary of State Mac Warner last month eviscerated the Big Brother censorship operation known as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

“When we have our own federal agencies lying to the American people, that’s the most insidious thing that we can do in elections,” the election integrity champion told officials from the FBI and CISA on a panel at the winter meeting of the [National Association of Secretaries of State](#) (NASS) in Washington, D.C., according to Wired’s Eric Geller. While Geller did his best to [defend](#) the federal agency — under the suggestive headline, “How a Right-Wing Controversy Could Sabotage US Election Security” — its history of censorship and election interference validate Warner’s concern.

The agency’s work, particularly the extracurricular business CISA has conducted in recent years, has been rightly criticized for its massive overreach. A [report](#) released last fall by the House Judiciary Committee and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government details just how CISA “Colluded With Big Tech And ‘Disinformation’ Partners To Censor Americans.”

“Although the investigation is ongoing, information obtained to date has revealed that the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)—an upstart agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)—has facilitated the censorship of Americans directly and through third-party intermediaries,” the congressional report states.

The report goes on to assert that the shadowy agency has “metastasized into the nerve center of the federal government’s domestic surveillance and censorship operations on social media.”

‘Platforms Have Got to Get More Comfortable With Gov’t’

Launched in 2018, CISA was supposed to be “an ancillary agency designed to protect ‘critical infrastructure’ and guard against cybersecurity threats,” the report notes. By 2020, the agency was “routinely” targeting what CISA officials claimed to be “disinformation” on social media. A year later, the agency had established a formal team devoted to what it decided was “misinformation,” “disinformation,” and “malinformation,” the latter of which CISA defines as “information based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate.” In other words, factual information that is problematic to the Biden regime.

CISA’s parent agency DHS launched the much-ridiculed and ultimately [disbanded](#) “Disinformation Governance Board” in 2022, to streamline the work of [colluding](#) with social media providers to shut down speech the government didn’t like or found inconvenient.

A federal [lawsuit](#) filed by then-Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt, now a U.S. senator, uncovered troubling conversations between the Biden administration and private companies about the pathways for removing information the government deemed false or misleading. A federal judge in a ruling last year barred the Biden administration from its censorship work, although the U.S. Supreme Court stayed the injunction when it took up the case.

Leaked documents obtained by The Intercept [show](#) that Microsoft executive and former DHS official Matt Masterson texted CISA director Jen Easterly in February 2022, saying “Platforms have got to get comfortable with gov’t. It’s really interesting how hesitant they remain.”

But it seems Big Tech was getting pretty comfortable with the Biden administration’s puppet enforcer. The Intercept report showed, among other alarming revelations, that Facebook operated a portal where Homeland Security could report allegations of “disinformation.”

CISA also has worked in concert with the Election Integrity Partnership and Virality Project, which is accused of conspiring with state, local, and federal government officials to trample the First Amendment rights of social media users, according to a class-action [lawsuit](#).

“But the EIP did not act alone. In fact, the EIP was created ‘in consultation’ with the Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, or CISA, with the idea for the EIP allegedly originating from CISA interns who were Stanford students,” The Federalist’s Senior Legal Correspondent Margot Cleveland [wrote](#) in May.

‘Only a Matter of Time’

Facing more public outrage over its unconstitutional actions, the CISA audaciously insisted it merely plays an “informational” role.

As the congressional report notes:

CISA is “working with federal partners to mature a whole-of-government approach” to curbing alleged misinformation and disinformation.

CISA considered the creation of an anti-misinformation “rapid response team” capable of physically deploying across the United States.

CISA moved its censorship operation to a CISA-funded non-profit after CISA and the Biden Administration were sued in federal court, implicitly admitting that its censorship activities are unconstitutional.

CISA wanted to use the same CISA-funded non-profit as its mouthpiece to “avoid the appearance of government propaganda.”

The agency’s advisory committee, according to the report, worried that it would be “only a matter of time before someone realizes we exist and starts asking about our work.” Incidentally, the advisory committee created a [“Protecting Critical Infrastructure from Misinformation & Disinformation” subcommittee](#) whose members included Vijaya Gadde — Twitter’s former chief legal officer who was “involved in censoring [the New York] Post’s Hunter Biden laptop” story. Gadde was also “behind the decision to permanently ban former President Trump from Twitter.”

‘Most Insidious Attack on American Democracy’

Geller’s Wired piece took aim at Warner, West Virginia’s outspoken secretary of state who is making a run for governor. At last month’s secretaries of state meeting, Warner “lambasted” CISA and FBI officials for “what he said was their agencies’ scheme to suppress the truth about US president Joe Biden’s son Hunter during the 2020 election and then cover their tracks,” Geller wrote, as if he is not privy to the same public documents and testimony confirming Warner’s assertions. In Geller’s account, the FBI was merely advising Twitter and Facebook to be on the lookout for Russian disinformation.

But how do you square the intelligence community’s “advisory” role after learning Joe Biden’s 2020 campaign prompted a former acting CIA director to “help Biden” by leading 50 colleagues to sign a letter spreading the false claim that damning emails from Hunter Biden’s laptop — published by the [New York Post](#) — were Russian disinformation? And all of that just weeks before the election.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the FBI and CISA officials did not respond to Warner’s charges and the meeting quickly went on, Geller reported before he quickly attempted to establish Warner as a dreaded [“election denier,”](#) noting that the secretary of state “attended an election-denier rally after Biden’s 2020 victory.”

But Warner is no conspiracy theorist. The West Point graduate served nearly a quarter century in the U.S. Army and then worked with the State Department in Afghanistan, according to his [bio](#). Warner knows about security threats.

CISA’s activities are “the most insidious attack on American democracy that I know of in U.S. history,” Warner told The Federalist in an interview last week. He called the targeting and censoring of state-defined “disinformation” a “psychological operation against the American people” that is “as bad as it gets.”

Warner said he has spoken to CISA officials multiple times but that they have yet to heed his calls for an after-action report on the 2020 election — to truly find out what went right and what went wrong.

A Warning

It appears most state elections officials don’t want to deal with the actual threat of the Biden administration’s disinformation and political silencing campaign.

“They know they will be lambasted by mainstream press,” Warner said. No one wants to be hit with the “election denier” label so effectively applied by the accomplice media. “It’s not easy, not politically expedient for them.”

Warner is one of the few speaking out against CISA and pulling away from involvement with the agency. But Geller worries Warner’s conservative colleagues will join him in breaking ties with CISA, as conservatives in Congress work to cut the budget of the abusive agency.

“It remains unclear how many of Warner’s colleagues agree with him. But when WIRED surveyed the other 23 Republican secretaries who oversee elections in their states, several of them said they would continue working with CISA,” Geller wrote.

“But others who praised CISA’s support also sounded notes of caution,” he added.

They need only look at CISA’s record and its rhetoric in the agency’s brief existence to know that Warner’s warnings aren’t merely the stuff of a “right-wing controversy.”

“One could argue we’re in the business of critical infrastructure, and the most critical infrastructure is our cognitive infrastructure, so building that resilience to misinformation and disinformation, I think, is incredibly important,” CISA director Jen Easterly said at [2021’s RE:WIRED conference](#).

Apparently running roughshod over the First Amendment isn’t warning enough.

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