

# U.S. Sen. Johnson: Grills big tech execs on censorship at Senate hearing

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**WASHINGTON** — On Wednesday, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC), questioned former and current executives from Twitter, Meta, YouTube and TikTok during a hearing entitled, “Social Media’s Impact on Homeland Security.”

Sen. Johnson pressed the witnesses on censorship of him and proceedings of the Committee, the silencing of conservative voices, the influence of misinformation surrounding elections, internal political bias at social media companies and their role in removing “COVID-19 disinformation.”



Sen. Johnson’s questioning can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). Excerpts are below.

## ***On social media election influence***

*Sen. Johnson:* “Twitter was actually very effective, when they blocked the New York Post articles on the Hunter Biden laptop. We had Jack Dorsey in front of the Commerce Committee back in, I think, October 2020. And both Senator Cruz and myself asked him, because we were talking about, you know, Russians using the platforms to impact our elections, and everybody agrees that could happen. We asked Mr. Dorsey, do you believe Twitter could impact the election? Mr. Dorsey said, ‘No.’ Mr. Roetter, do you believe Twitter has the capability of impacting the election?”

*Former Twitter VP:* “I think all these social platforms are they’re so massive, it’s

hard to believe that they're not impacting."

*Sen. Johnson:* "Mr. Boland, do you believe that as well?"

*Former Facebook VP:* "These platforms absolutely have influence and I believe- "

*Sen. Johnson:* "Mr. Cain?"

*Lincoln Network Senior Fellow:* "Absolutely."

*Sen. Johnson:* "Okay. So there is a problem right there. Okay. And I appreciate you acknowledging that fact."

### ***On the disinformation campaign***

*Sen. Johnson:* "I want to talk about a little bit about the other disinformation coming out of this committee. The day or two after Senator Grassley and I issued our report based on U.S. documents, interviews with U.S. persons, our now committee chairman, who was then committee ranking member, issued a press release, said Peters, Wyden response to Republican effort to amplify Russian disinformation. You said, I generated a partisan political report that is rooted in Russian disinformation. Mr. Chairman, do you want to retract that false allegation now? Now that we know that the Hunter Biden laptop is accurate, that there has not been one scintilla of information provided in Senator Grassley's and my report that has ever been refuted. It was 100% accurate. And yet you, as ranking member of the committee, accused me repeatedly of soliciting and disseminating Russian disinformation. Do you want to retract your false allegation here that you issued in your press release on September 23rd?"

*Sen. Peters:* "No. Let's just focus on what we're trying to do."

*Sen. Johnson:* "Well, I'm focusing on this because this is exactly the type of harm we can do to our political process. When you have these big tech companies engaging in political debate, censoring one side of the political spectrum and amplifying the false allegations of another side."

### ***On censoring COVID-19 information***

*Sen. Johnson:* "So obviously, this was published and they were publishing other similar information during that time period when President Biden lied to the

American public that this was a pandemic of the unvaxxed. And if you got vaccinated, you're not going to go to the hospital, you're not going to be in an ICU unit and you're not going to die. Well, 63.5% of the people fully vaccinated were dying in England at the exact same time. Why didn't you pull this? Have you ever labeled the President of the United States comment as 'misinformation?' Have you ever done that? Any of you? I'll take that as a no.

"Again, I just wonder, who are the authorities? Who do you think you are to censor information from eminently qualified doctors who had the courage and compassion to treat COVID patients when the NIH guideline was basically, if you test positive for COVID, go home. Be afraid. Isolate yourself. Don't do anything until you're so sick, we'll send you to the hospital. We'll give you Remdesivir, where we have 1,600 deaths so far. We'll put you on a ventilator and we'll watch you die. You guys bear a fair amount of responsibility for hundreds of thousands of people not being treated, and I would say probably dying that didn't have to die. I hope you're proud of yourselves."