

Barack Obama Embraces 'New Role': Promoting Censorship

[Wendell Husebø](#) 20 Apr 2022



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Former President Barack Obama will deliver a speech at Stanford University on Thursday that embraces his “new role” of policing the national debate over whether social media companies should censor political opponents.

Obama "is expected to add his voice to demands for rules to rein in the flood of lies polluting public discourse," the *New York Times* [reported](#). "In private meetings and public appearances over the last year, the former president has waded deeply into the public fray over misinformation and disinformation, warning that the scourge of falsehoods online has eroded the foundations of democracy at home and abroad."

The *Times* noted it is not the first time Obama has delivered a speech on the topic. Last month, Obama [spoke](#) at an event organized by the University of Chicago and the *Atlantic*. Obama said during the speech that social media companies should censor what "we don't think are good for society."

"I think it is reasonable for us as a society to have a debate and then put in place a combination of regulatory measures and industry norms that leave intact the opportunity for these platforms to make money," Obama continued. "But say to them that there's certain practices you engage in that we don't think are good for society."

On Tuesday, Obama took to Twitter to suggest that censorship is needed to prevent "real challenges" to the Washington, DC, establishment. "In recent years, we've seen how quickly disinformation spreads, especially on social media," he said. "This has created real challenges for our democracy."

Obama's "new role" of championing censorship, as dubbed by the *Times*, comes after Twitter [censored](#) Hunter Biden's "laptop from hell" story, while Facebook [failed](#) "to suppress sketchily sourced or facially unreliable stories — such as, say, the Steele Dossier and endless articles based on it."

The social networks' misdeeds have ignited a national debate over whether the platforms should be the arbiter of truth. As Elon Musk is attempting a hostile takeover of the social media network, polling suggests a plurality of Americans would support Musk restoring Donald Trump on the platform. According to Rasmussen Reports, 46 percent would [approve](#) of Trump being restored, while 43 percent opposed. When independents were asked, 47 percent approved and 36 percent opposed, an 11-point spread.

When the polling agency [asked](#) if Musk's potential ownership of Twitter would be "good," only 24 percent of Democrats said it would be, while 56 percent of Republicans were in favor.

The polling is good news for those who oppose censorship and support the discourse of a variety of ideas. Free speech is a pillar of American society and has historically only been opposed by those who wish to

squelch political opponents.

In 1789, John Adams [passed](#) the Sedition Act, sanctioning the deportation, fine, or imprisonment of political opponents he deemed a threat of publicizing “false, scandalous, or malicious writing” against the government of the United States. In October 1799, Adams jailed a congressman and publisher, Matthew Lyon, for criticizing the president in print and in speech. The law was revoked under Thomas Jefferson.

Today, social media companies, which are mostly aligned with the Democrat Party, do not have the authority to imprison opponents. Instead, those who violate the terms of service are simply canceled from the public square.

Follow Wendell Husebø on [Twitter](#) and [Gettr](#) @WendellHusebø. He is the author of [Politics of Slave Morality](#).