



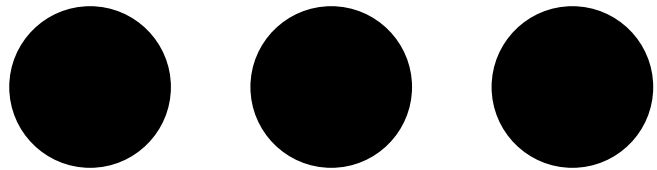
Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on October 15, 2020

Hawley: Facebook, Twitter, Illegally Donated to Biden Campaign By Suppressing NY Post Story

U.S. Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) has accused Facebook and Twitter of illegal contributions to the Biden presidential campaign because the two social-media behemoths tried to suppress [a story](#) about Biden, his son Hunter, and their shady business dealings in Ukraine.

[The story in the New York Post](#): Joe Biden lied when he said he never discussed with Hunter the latter's inexplicably lucrative business activities in the country.

Immediately, Facebook and Twitter whirred into damage-control mode for their candidate. Both [suppressed the story](#), and even [shut down](#) the Twitter accounts of the *Post* and White House spokeswoman Kayleigh McEnany.



BREAKING: Twitter has locked the personal account of White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany for sharing news Democrats don't like.

pic.twitter.com/eR8HhkgqVY

— Trump War Room - Text
TRUMP to 88022
(@TrumpWarRoom) [October 14, 2020](#)

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Hawley's point: Blocking the story protects Joe Biden, and is, therefore, an off-the-books, in-kind campaign contribution.

Hawley sent three letters yesterday: one to Facebook, one to Twitter, and one to the Federal Elections Commission.

Letter to Zuckerberg

Hawley wrote to Facebook chieftain Mark Zuckerberg to ask why the company blocked a story from a mainstream-media source while its social-justice warriors "fact-checked" it.

[The Post reported](#) that it secured e-mails from a MacBook Pro, presumably owned by Hunter Biden or a Biden operative, left at a repair shop. The owner of the shop turned a hard drive from the laptop over to the FBI and Rudy Giuliani, a top advisor to President Trump. The *Post* published e-mails from the hard



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drive that clearly show Joe Biden lied when he said he had “never spoken to my son about his overseas business dealings” in Ukraine.

One e-mail, dated April 17, 2015, thanked Hunter Biden for arranging a meeting with his father, who was then vice president and President Obama’s top man on Ukraine policy.

[Biden famously bragged](#) that he forced Ukraine to fire the country’s top prosecutor, who was investigating Burisma, the company that employed Hunter, a notorious drug addict. Photos circulating online show Hunter Biden asleep with a crack pipe in his mouth.



Facebook quickly attempted to suppress discussion of the exposé.

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“A representative from your company has publicly stated that Facebook will be ‘reducing [the story’s] distribution on our platform’ while a third-party fact-check takes place,” [Hawley wrote](#) to Zuckerberg:

The seemingly selective nature of this public intervention suggests partiality on the part of Facebook. And your efforts to suppress the distribution of content revealing potentially unethical activity by a candidate for president raises a number of additional questions, to which I expect responses immediately.

Hawley asked whether Facebook’s “normal policy” is suppressing stories “before they have been fact-checked?” and if so, what is the policy and where has it stated?

As well:

If you have evidence that this news story contains “disinformation” or have otherwise determined that there are inaccuracies with the reporting, will you disclose them to the public so that they can assess your findings?



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Why did you endeavor to publicly state that such a story was subject to a fact-check? Isn't such a public intervention itself a reflection of Facebook's assessment of a news report's credibility?

Did any member of the Biden-Harris presidential campaign team or any person representing themselves as a representative of the campaign's interests ask, encourage, or direct Facebook to suppress the New York Post story?

Hawley also explained the move, citing the *Post*: "Employees of the six largest Silicon Valley tech firms — including Facebook — have donated nearly \$5 million to the Biden-Harris campaign."

Letter to Dorsey

In his letter to Twitter CEO Dorsey, Hawley targeted the social-media site's false claim that the story contained "hacked materials," and thus violated the so-called Twitter Rules.

"In line with our Hacked Materials Policy, as well as our approach to blocking URLs, we are taking action to block any links to or images of the material in question on Twitter," [Twitter told](#) the *Post*.

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[Wrote Hawley:](#)

A Twitter representative has since stated that "in line with our Hacked Materials Policy, as well as our approach to blocking URLs, we are taking action to block any links to or images of the material in question on Twitter." This statement raises questions about the applicability of your policy, especially because such a pre-emptive removal of a news story on such grounds — and the additional scrutiny you have applied — appears to be an unusual intervention that is not universally applied to all content.

Hawley demanded that Dorsey explain how Twitter determined the materials were "hacked," and why it shut down the Twitter account of a paper as large as the *Post*.

"If you have evidence that this news story contains 'disinformation' or have otherwise determined that there are inaccuracies with the reporting, will you disclose them to the public so that they can assess your findings?" Hawley asked.

And, he asked, did the Biden campaign contact Twitter to demand it block the story?

Illegal Contribution

Thus did Hawley accuse the two social-media sites of illegal campaign contributions.

"This conduct does not merely censor the core political speech of ordinary Americans, though it certainly does that," the [senator wrote](#) to FEC General Counsel Lisa Stevenson. "Twitter's and Facebook's conduct also appears to constitute a clear violation of federal campaign-finance law. Federal law prohibits any corporation from making a contribution to a federal candidate for office."

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Because a contribution is "anything of value ... for the purpose of influencing any election for Federal office," the "active suppression of public speech about the New York Post article appears to constitute contributions under federal law."

The social media sites are providing "extraordinary value" to the campaign because suppressing the



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story is “depriving voters access to information that, if true, would link the former Vice President to corrupt Ukrainian oligarchs. And this censorship manifestly will influence the presidential election.”



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