

Why Burn Books When You Can Bury Them? The White House Pressured Amazon to Target Dissenting Books

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The House Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government on Monday revealed yet another facet of the Biden Administration's sprawling censorship system that targeted dissenting books. It appears that, as with social media companies, it succeeded in getting the company not to promote disfavored books.

Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan [revealed](#) on X that the White House was directly involved in the censorship campaign. That includes a 2021 email from one Biden official asking to discuss "the high levels of propaganda and misinformation and disinformation of [sic] Amazon?"

THE AMAZON FILES - "feeling pressure from the White House"

Internal docs subpoenaed by [@JudiciaryGOP](#) & [@Weaponization](#) indicate that [@amazon](#) bowed down to Biden White House pressure to censor BOOKS.

□ Thread:

— Rep. Jim Jordan (@Jim_Jordan) [February 5, 2024](#)

Amazon in turn appears to ask only how high the Biden White House wants it to jump on censorship: "[i]s the [Biden] Admin asking us to remove books, or are they more concerned about search results/order (or both)?"

After the meeting, Amazon confirmed in [an email](#) that it was actively doing what the government demanded in suppressing sales by not promoting disfavored books: “As a reminder, we did enable Do Not Promote for anti-vax books whose primary purpose is to persuade readers vaccines are unsafe or ineffective on 3/9, and will review additional handling options for these books with you.”

This effort notably parallels demands from Democratic leaders who have called for [enlightened algorithms](#) to frame what citizens access on the internet. In 2021, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) objected that people were not listening to the informed views of herself and leading experts. Instead, they were reading views of skeptics by searching Amazon and finding books by “prominent spreaders of misinformation.”

Warren blamed Amazon for failing to limit searches or choices: “This pattern and practice of misbehavior suggests that Amazon is either unwilling or unable to modify its business practices to prevent the spread of falsehoods or the sale of inappropriate products.” In her letter, Warren gave the company 14 days to change its algorithms to throttle and obstruct efforts to read opposing views.

It is important to keep in mind that these efforts at censorship targeted scientists who have been vindicated in many of their objections to policies and claims of the government. For example, a [new scientific review by 12 researchers](#) from leading universities found little support for the claims that masks reduced Covid exposures.

The Centers for Disease and Control Prevention (CDC) initially rejected the use of a mask mandate. However, the issue became a political weapon as politicians and the press claimed that questioning masks was anti-science and even unhinged. In April 2020, the CDC reversed its position and called for the masking of the entire population, including children as young as 2 years old. The mask mandate and other pandemic measures like the closing of schools are now cited as fueling emotional and developmental problems in children.

The [closing of schools and businesses](#) was also challenged by some critics as unnecessary. Many of those critics were also censored. It now appears that they may have been right. Many countries did not close schools and did not experience increases in Covid. However, we are now facing alarming drops in testing scores and alarming rises in medical illness among the young.

Masks became a major social and political dividing line in politics and the media. Maskless people were chased from stores and denounced in Congress. Then-CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield said during a Senate hearing that “face masks are the most important powerful health tool we have.”

The head of the World Health Organization [even supported censorship](#) to combat what he called an “infodemic.”

A lawsuit opposing these efforts was filed by Missouri and Louisiana and joined by leading experts, including Drs. Jayanta Bhattacharya (Stanford University) and Martin Kulldorff (Harvard University). Yet, universities joined social media companies and politicians in targeting dissenters and silencing opposing voices.

Bhattacharya previously [objected](#) to the suspension of Dr. Clare Craig after she raised concerns about Pfizer trial documents. Those doctors were the co-authors of the [Great](#)

[Barrington Declaration](#), which advocated for a more focused Covid response that targeted the most vulnerable population rather than widespread lockdowns and mandates. Many are now questioning the efficacy and cost of the massive lockdown as well as the real value of masks or the rejection of natural immunities as an alternative to vaccination. Yet, these experts and others were attacked for such views just a year ago. Some found themselves censored on social media for challenging claims of Dr. Fauci and others.

The media has quietly acknowledged the science questioning mask efficacy and school closures without addressing its own role in attacking those who raised these objections. Even raising the lab theory on the origin of Covid 19 (a theory now treated as plausible) was denounced as a conspiracy theory. The science and health reporter for the New York Times, [Apoorva Mandavilli](#), even denounced the theory as “racist.”

Again, the objection to the censorship system is not that all of these views are correct, but that the public was being actively hampered in reading or hearing opposing views.

The new emails also show direct federal efforts supporting censorship. I [testified at the first hearing by the special committee](#) investigating the censorship system. I warned that there was ample evidence of a system based on “censorship by surrogate” where government agencies used academic and media allies to silence those with opposing views.

Despite the [determined opposition by Democratic members and the Biden Administration](#), the investigation has revealed a wide array of [grants to academic](#) and third party organizations to create [blacklists](#) or to [pressure advertisers](#) to withdraw support for conservative sites. The subjects for censorship [ranged](#) from election fraud to social justice to climate change.

Now we can add private demands to target dissenting books to suppress sales. It is far more appealing to certain sensibilities than banning publications or removing copies. After all, why burn books if you can bury them?

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