

# Fauci Deposed in GOP Lawsuit Alleging COVID-19 Collusion with Big Tech



Dr. Anthony Fauci on Wednesday faced questions from Attorneys General Eric Schmitt (Missouri) and Jeff Landry (Louisiana) for his alleged role in colluding with Big Tech to control the narrative about COVID-19.

The deposition began at 8 a.m. ET and is sealed under court order as part of a lawsuit filed in May accusing top-ranking government officials of working with social media companies Meta [Facebook], Twitter, and YouTube to suppress freedom of speech “[under the guise](#) of combatting misinformation” on COVID-19.

In a [Tweet](#) following the 7-hour deposition, Schmitt said one thing is clear, “When Fauci speaks, social media censors.”

Schmitt also gave a “few takeaways” from Fauci’s deposition: He knew the lab leak theory had merit, but it’d come back to bite him, so he immediately sought to discredit it. He

defended lockdowns and believes the rest of us “don’t have the ability” to determine what’s best for ourselves.

*Some takeaways from the deposition of Fauci:*

- *Fauci knew the Lab Leak theory had merit but it’d come back to him & sought to immediately discredit it*
- *He defended lockdowns*
- *The rest of us “don’t have the ability” to determine what’s best for ourselves*

*More to come—Stay tuned*

*– Eric Schmitt (@Eric\_Schmitt) [November 24, 2022](#)*

In a [statement released Tuesday](#) in advance of Fauci’s deposition, Schmitt said:

*“Tomorrow, along with my colleague from Louisiana, my Office and I will depose Dr. Anthony Fauci in our lawsuit against the Biden Administration for allegedly colluding with social media companies to censor freedom of speech.*

*“Since we filed our landmark lawsuit, we have uncovered documents and discovery that show clear coordination between the Biden Administration and social media companies on censoring speech, but we’re not done yet. We plan to get answers on behalf of the American people. Stay tuned.”*

Schmitt and Landry filed the lawsuit on May 5, 2022. A motion for expedited preliminary injunction-related discovery was granted on July 12, paving the way for Missouri and Louisiana to [proceed with discovery](#) and obtain documents from top Biden administration officials and Big Tech companies.

The four-count lawsuit alleges social media companies falsely labeled truthful content “disinformation” and “misinformation” and contends the suppression constitutes government action,

violating free speech protected by the U.S. constitution.

The [complaint also alleges](#) that DHS' Disinformation Governance Board was created "to induce, label, and pressure the censorship of disfavored content, viewpoints and speakers on social media platforms" and that HHS and DHS violated the Administrative Procedure Act.

The lawsuit provides [several examples](#) of truthful information censored by social media companies, who later admitted the content was truthful or credible. In addition, the lawsuit could reveal the Biden administration's "behind-the-scenes efforts" to discourage the [dissemination of information](#) related to the lab-leak theory of COVID-19's origins and the efficiency of masks and lockdowns.

[New Civil Liberties Alliance](#), a nonpartisan, nonprofit civil rights group that fights to protect freedoms from violations by the administrative state and represents Drs. Jayanta Bhattacharya, Martin Kulldorff, Aaron Kheriaty, and Jill Hines [joined the lawsuit](#) in August, as did Jim Hoft, founder and editor-in-chief of The Gateway Pundit.

The request for depositions was granted on October 21 by U.S. District Judge Terry Doughty. Several officials named in the suit, including former White House press secretary Jen Psaki, argued they shouldn't be required to be deposed. Still, a federal judge on Monday [denied a request](#) to stop Pasaki's subpoena.

In addition to Fauci and Psaki, other government officials scheduled to be deposed include FBI Supervisory Special Agent Elvis Chan, Carol Crawford, chief of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's digital media branch, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency director Jen Easterly, White House director of digital strategy Rob Flaherty, Daniel Kimmage, an official at the State Department's global engagement center and U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy.

[In an order issued Monday](#), the 5th Circuit temporarily halted the depositions of Easterly, Flaherty and Murthy scheduled for December. A three-judge appellate panel [found](#) Doughty erred in approving the depositions without first examining whether there were “other means” of obtaining the information the plaintiffs are seeking.”

The order states that before any depositions go forward, the district court must “analyze whether the information sought can be obtained through less intrusive, alternative means, such as further written discovery or depositions of lower-ranking officials.” The order also requires Doughty to give written findings as to the “availability and sufficiency of alternatives” for obtaining the information.

Thursday’s court order came after [lawyers for the government argued](#) the plaintiffs should not be allowed to depose the three officials on the basis that they are high-ranking government officials and that the depositions would “unavoidably distract” them from “their important and time-sensitive duties,” which would “cause irreparable harm.”

Nevertheless, the federal government’s motion for a partial stay of Judge Doughty’s deposition order was denied.

The government also tried to get former White House press secretary Jenn Psaki out of questioning claiming there is “no evidence” she had met or had been in contact with any social media executives concerning purported “misinformation,” despite the critical remarks about social media platforms made during White House press briefings.

In his November 21 order, Judge Doughty rejected that claim, writing: “Despite the fact that Psaki is a former high-ranking official, the potential burden upon Psaki was outweighed by the need to determine whether free speech had been suppressed.”

Previously, a [federal judge in Virginia rejected](#) the [arguments](#)

[made by Psaki](#) and [the DOJ](#), including that sitting for a deposition would place an “undue burden” on her, taking her away from her family and her new job at MSNBC for several days.

Magistrate Judge Ivan Davis of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia dismissed Psaki’s claims, arguing that Psaki and the DOJ were attempting an “end-run” around the deposition order. Judge Davis passed the issue to Judge Doughty.

Judge Doughty previously found “that Plaintiffs have proven that Jennifer Psaki has personal knowledge about the issue concerning censorship across social media as it related to COVID-19 and ancillary issues of COVID-19.”

“Psaki has made a number of statements that are relevant to the Government’s involvement in a number of social-media platforms’ efforts to censor its users across the board for sharing information related to COVID-19,” Judge Doughty said. “Any burden on Psaki is outweighed by the need to determine whether free speech has been suppressed.”