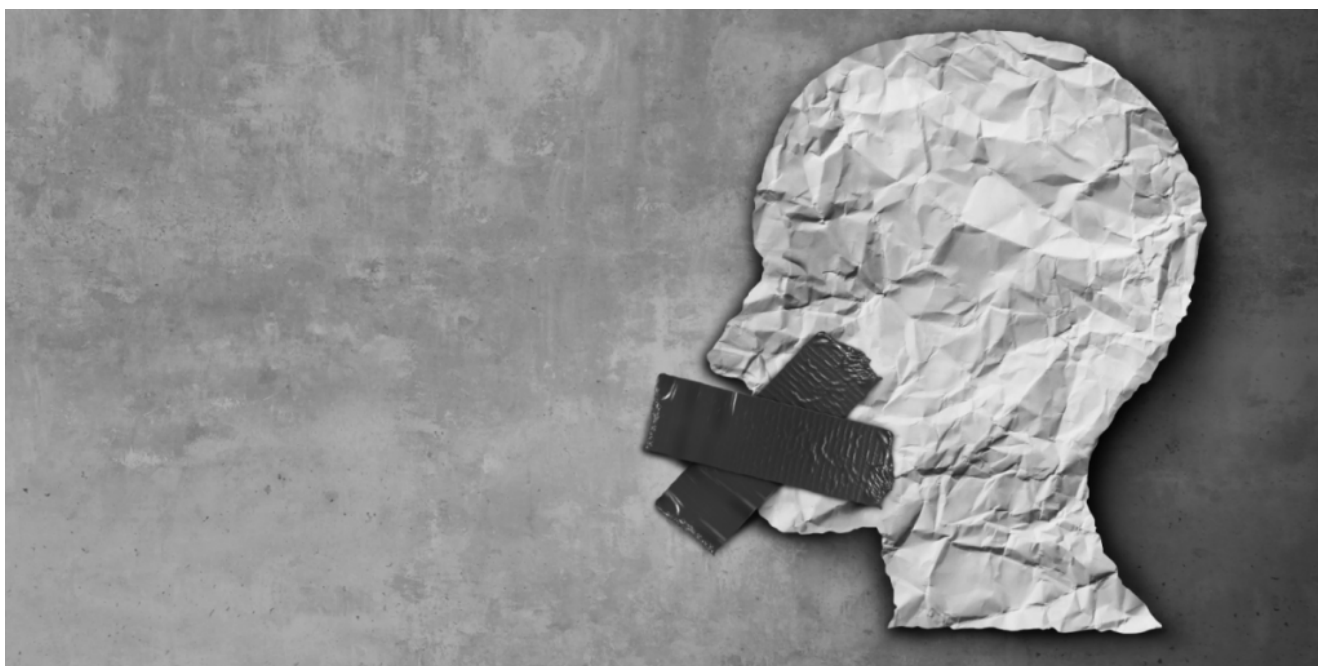


# Unmasking the Censorship Industrial Complex: America First Legal Exposes Deep State Ties to Suppress COVID-19 Narratives



Bombshell documents obtained by [America First Legal](#) (AFL) have blown the lid off an unprecedented partnership between the federal government, Big Tech, and foreign entities to suppress speech and manipulate public opinion during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This 500-page [report](#) was obtained from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) through [AFL's lawsuits](#)—and exposes how the agency repurposed its mission, under the guise of combating “foreign disinformation,” to target domestic narratives that deviated from the government’s preferred messaging.

CISA, a branch of the Department of Homeland Security, was initially established to protect the nation’s critical

infrastructure from cyber threats. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency expanded its role to include monitoring and countering what it labeled as “mis-, dis-, and malinformation” (MDM) related to the virus. This expansion led to the creation of the COVID-19 Countering Foreign Influence Task Force (CCFITF), which, despite its name, focused significantly on domestic narratives.

“CISA was created to protect the homeland from terrorists, not to protect incompetent federal bureaucrats. The incoming Administration must clean house,” said AFL attorney Reed Rubinstein.

## **Government Used “Switchboarding” to Moderate Content**

One of the most concerning aspects of CISA’s activities was the development of a “switchboarding” system. This process involved flagging specific content for social media companies, which then removed or suppressed it. While framed as a way to counteract misinformation, the process often targeted legitimate debate and dissenting opinions. Some of the topics targeted turned out to be true.

Brian Scully, head of CISA’s MDM team, acknowledged in internal communications that flagged content would “trigger content moderation” on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Topics flagged for moderation included discussions on:

- The origins of COVID-19, including lab-leak theories.
- The efficacy of masks in preventing transmission.
- Alternative treatments like Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) and Ivermectin.
- Vaccine efficacy and potential side effects.

Notably, when former President Donald Trump discussed taking

HCQ as a preventive measure, CISA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) monitored the social media response. Discussions supporting HCQ were flagged and labeled as misinformation despite emerging studies that suggested its potential benefits. This blatant dismissal of alternative perspectives contributed to a lack of informed consent for millions of Americans.

## **Government Co-opted Disaster Relief Agency to Censor Americans**

FEMA played a surprising and controversial role in aiding CISA's censorship initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic. FEMA's expertise in logistics and crisis management was co-opted to collect information on social media platforms through "FEMA Social Listening" and by monitoring "Public Sentiment" on COVID-19 narratives.

FEMA is the government agency that steps in to help communities recover from disasters like hurricanes, wildfires, and floods. However, during the pandemic, FEMA's mission was expanded. Instead of just managing emergency responses, FEMA began analyzing online conversations and reporting on public reactions to topics such as vaccine mandates and alternative COVID-19 treatments.

For instance, FEMA partnered with CISA to monitor discussions surrounding the controversial "Plandemic" documentary. By tracking its spread and influence, FEMA helped identify individuals and groups amplifying dissent against public health measures. FEMA's involvement shows how resources meant for disaster relief were redirected to bolster censorship efforts.

This collaboration between FEMA and CISA shows how the pandemic blurred the lines between agencies' defined roles and how these shifts contributed to the erosion of public trust in

government institutions.

## **Government Used Foreign Entities to Censor Americans**

CISA also worked closely with international organizations, including the UK-based Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) and the Global Disinformation Index (GDI). The GDI is a British censorship organization funded by [George Soros](#) infamous for feeding [conservative website blacklists](#) to ad companies.

These groups have been criticized for advocating the de-platforming of U.S. citizens, raising questions about foreign interference in American free speech.

The CCDH was particularly active in targeting vaccine skeptics, using reports such as the “Disinformation Dozen” to push for censorship. By outsourcing efforts to foreign entities, CISA circumvented constitutional protections and allowed foreign influence over U.S. public discourse.

## **Amplification of the Streisand Effect**

Attempts to suppress content often backfired, amplifying it further through the Streisand effect. The “Streisand effect” refers to a phenomenon where attempts to hide, remove, or censor information inadvertently leads to significantly more attention being drawn to it.

A prominent example cited by the report is the viral “Plandemic” documentary, which continued to circulate on alternative platforms like BitChute even after being banned on mainstream sites. Either way, it’s very clear the government was trying to censor speech.

# **AFL's Legal Battle for Transparency**

By partnering with private companies and foreign entities, federal agencies sidestepped First Amendment safeguards to suppress dissent, damaging public trust in democratic institutions and public health authorities.

AFL's lawsuits against CISA and the Department of State aim to uncover the full extent of government collusion with Big Tech and media organizations. These lawsuits also target the Global Engagement Center, which AFL alleges coordinated with media outlets to amplify government-approved narratives and suppress dissenting voices.