

CONGRESS SAYS TWITTER, FACEBOOK AND GOOGLE SHOULD BE LICENSED BECAUSE THEY ARE SO SCREWED UP

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[Whistleblower details foreign agents placed at Twitter, lack of data safeguards](#)

[Twitter whistleblower testifies to Senate of major security flaws: 'They don't know what they have'](#)

[The Twitter whistleblower made a convincing case that Twitter is a mess](#)

[Twitter whistleblower testifies before Congress over security flaws](#)

[Twitter whistleblower: Lack of access, data controls invite exploitation](#)

[Twitter whistleblower's Senate hearing starts with a bombshell: Company has Chinese agent on payroll](#)

[Whistleblower says China, India had agents working for Twitter](#)

[Senators blast Twitter's alleged security failures as whistleblower testifies](#)

Hacker and network security specialist Peiter "Mudge" Zatko testified Tuesday before the Senate Judiciary Committee about allegations in his [whistleblower report](#) last month.

The Senate hearing arose from intense concerns that Twitter executives have failed in their responsibility to protect user data. In his whistleblower report, Zatko detailed a systemic lack of institutional concern for users' data privacy or platform security throughout his tenure as the social media company's security chief.

Persisting throughout the Senate hearing was a bipartisan strand of disappointment, as if Twitter were a long-treasured American manufacturer just recently succumbed to poor leadership.

But Americans should examine whether there ever was a perch from which Twitter fell to cause this disappointment in the company's utter lack of concern for any outcome besides profit.

Senators may rightly express shock at the absence of internal security policies at Twitter, but much of that shock should be directed at the lawmakers who allowed an oligarchy to grow in Silicon Valley.

If the testimony of Zatko, better known as Mudge, is not enough to compel lawmakers in Congress to turn over the tables inside the temple of Silicon Valley, then America needs new lawmakers.

The World Economic Forum's maxim "You'll own nothing and be happy" is already true on Twitter. Mudge's responses to Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., revealed that over 4,000 Twitter employees enjoy unrestricted access to the application.

This means that 4,000 unvetted employees could observe private messages, "hijack" accounts, and observe every scroll or click on Twitter's platform.

Your Twitter account is not your own, and every action you take on it is subject to the whims of a Silicon Valley engineer. Or a Twitter account, because of unchecked platform controls, could belong to an agent of the Chinese Communist Party with this access.

Because of Mudge's testimony, we know of [at least one](#) Chinese spy who worked at Twitter. Whether the foreign agent was Chinese, Indian, or a Saudi is immaterial to the question of

how unaccountable a critical public utility is to the interests and well-being of the American people.

Mudge made clear to senators that Twitter wasn't compelled to scrutinize the threat of foreign interference, because its profit interest was found in lax regulatory control. Congress should change this dynamic for Twitter and the rest of Silicon Valley.

Herein lies the fundamental flaw of the expectation that the "free market" is the best way to confront the oligarchy of Big Tech. Security measures for corporate data are difficult to implement and require a heavy financial and personnel investment.

In response to a line of questioning by Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., Mudge expressed "hope" that Twitter's executives would adhere to more responsible security practices.

But hope, unfortunately, isn't enough to counter the demands for unrestricted access to data in the name of efficient, profitable commercial surveillance.

Twitter and its California tech partners see Americans as users in the same way that the drug cartels see American teenagers as users. Twitter can take advantage of and manipulate us for profit and ideology.

As a result of Mudge's whistleblower report, we no longer can claim to be surprised. Tech giants will act to subjugate an [entire class of Americans](#) unless compelled not to do so by the fullest extent of the law.

Tech policy-by-hope has failed us, and we also should stop hoping for entrepreneur Elon Musk, or any other billionaire white knight, to salvage a critical tech common carrier for the rest of us. It's clear that Musk is doing everything he can *not* to buy Twitter, despite shareholders' voting to approve the company's sale at the price he offered.

While Musk owning Twitter might make for a platform more friendly to free speech, he would face significant institutional opposition to meaningful reform, while still allowing the people's representatives to avoid real accountability.

The rot Musk would have to expose is so deep that Twitter doesn't even have a testing environment for the platform. This means that every software update is tested on real Twitter users, as opposed to a practice environment where engineers could verify functionality before widespread deployment.

Quite literally, Americans are a science experiment for the bizarre worldviews of engineers who have no legal duty to the common good.

Many might miss the significance of this, but any person with experience developing software knows that the absence of a testing environment for new features is an irresponsible, childish exposure of Twitter's business and operations.

Congress should pursue all-encompassing tech legislation that includes anti-trust measures, speech protections, data privacy, and child protection. Later, we will get to the details of what this bill should include.

Regardless, corporate officeholders should be personally liable for breaking the laws that elected representatives write. As Peiter "Mudge" Zatkos outlined to the Senate committee, corporate fines are meaningless.

It is past time we hold decision-makers in these Silicon Valley conglomerates personally accountable for dereliction of duty as leaders of common carriers that are so central to the American way of life.

[Elon Musk's Twitter trial delay request denied, but addition of whistleblower complaint gets approval](#)

[Twitter claims its ~\\$7 million whistleblower payment doesn't breach Musk deal](#)

[Has Twitter failed Cybersecurity 101? An expert examines a whistleblower's claims](#)

[The people looking for dirt to discredit Twitter whistleblower "Mudge" are not going to find it](#)

[New Durham bombshell: FBI paid Russian accused of lying as a confidential informant against Trump](#)

Twitter users voiced outrage after the Biden White House announced Friday that former Clinton campaign manager and Obama counselor [John Podesta](#) will assume the role of senior adviser to the president for clean energy innovation and implementation.

"We are fortunate that John Podesta will lead our continued innovation and implementation. His deep roots in climate and clean energy policy and experience at senior levels of government mean we can truly hit the ground running to take advantage of the massive clean energy opportunities in front of us," President Biden said in a statement tacked onto the press release.

The move elicited shock waves from [conservative voices on Twitter](#), reinvigorating critiques of Podesta's leaked emails from a 2016 WikiLeaks release and pointing to alleged corruption within the Biden administration.

"Corruption 101," tweeted former Texas House candidate Patrick McGuinness.

[7 BIGGEST REVELATIONS FROM WIKILEAKS RELEASE OF PODESTA EMAILS](#)



John Podesta (2013 Getty Images)

Republican strategist CJ Pearson ripped Podesta as a "Clinton crony" in his own reaction, echoing the label from other conservatives across the platform.

Some pointed out the staggering \$370 billion climate spending fund Podesta will oversee in his new role, including Becker News chief editor and CEO Kyle Becker, who tweeted articles on the former Clinton aide with the caption, "Meet John Podesta. He is a veteran political operative. He is now Biden's climate adviser. He will manage a \$370 billion climate slush fund. Meet John's brother Tony Podesta. He was paid \$500,000 by BLACKLISTED Chinese firm Huawei to lobby the Biden White House. Any questions?"

['PLEASE DON'T ... TELL ANYONE I DID THIS': POLITICO REPORTER RAN ARTICLE PAST PODESTA. WIKILEAKS REVEALS](#)



The "Anonymous" group went from being outspoken supporters of WikiLeaks and Bradley Manning to "hacktivist" attacks against various corporate and government websites. (Reuters)

Actor Britt Griffith quote tweeted Becker, labeling Podesta's appointment to the role as evidence of the "level of corruption" going on in Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, leftist Twitter users praised Biden's decision, touting Podesta as well-suited for the position while claiming that climate funds are "in good hands."



[Video](#)

After serving as chief of staff to former President Bill Clinton and as counselor to former [President Barack Obama](#), Podesta entered the spotlight for emails WikiLeaks allegedly retrieved and published from his private Gmail account in 2016 while serving as former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's campaign manager.

The incident sparked accusations that Russian intelligence officials were working to sway the 2016 election in former President Donald Trump's favor.

THE past 20 years have been a golden age for crony capitalists—tycoons active in industries where chumminess with government is part of the game. As commodity and property prices soared, so did the value of permits to dig mines in China or build offices in São Paulo. Telecoms spectrum doled out by Indian officials created instant billionaires. Implicit state guarantees let casino banking thrive on Wall Street and beyond. Many people worried about a new “robber baron” era, akin to America’s in the late 19th century. They had a point. Worldwide, the worth of tycoons in crony industries soared by 385% in 2004-14, to \$2 trillion, or a third of total billionaire wealth; much of it (though by no means all) in the emerging world.

For the past decade, a strange migration of a couple of thousand people from all over the world to Las Vegas takes place — in the middle of July. They come — at least most — not to gamble and certainly not for the weather where the normal daytime temperature is a 100-plus degrees, but to participate in an event called FreedomFest. This confab has been created and organized by economist Mark Skousen, with the goal of bringing together people who believe in free markets and limited government.

Most of the folks attending define themselves as libertarians, which can mean anything from Republicans who want somewhat lower government spending, taxation and regulation, to those who want almost no government. Many of the participants are well known, such as publisher and former presidential candidate Steve Forbes, libertarian TV journalists John Stossel and Kennedy, financial guru Jim Rogers and others. But also in attendance is a cross section of both young and old who are concerned about protecting themselves financially and the loss of their personal liberty.

Almost all would also claim to be capitalists, meaning they believe in private ownership, rule of law, free markets, free trade, and limited government intervention in their economic lives. Calling someone a capitalist is a pejorative term in many media and left-leaning political circles. Mr. Forbes saw it as a market opportunity — when a number of competing business magazines seemed to almost be embarrassed in having to defend capitalism — so Forbes magazine proudly refers to itself as a “capitalist tool.”

The opponents of capitalism have succeeded in clouding the minds of many, by failing to distinguish between free-market capitalism and crony capitalism. Crony capitalism exists when politicians and government bureaucrats collude with business people to restrict competition and obtain monopoly advantages. Examples abound with everything from sole source government contracts and special tax treatments to restricting the number of taxicabs through the sale of “medallions.”

The various government restrictions raise prices for consumers and discourage innovation. State and local government officials collude with industry groups to require expensive training for hairdressers, flower arrangers and interior decorators — all in attempts to restrict entry by new potential competitors. Just look at the number of governments that against the desires of their own citizens are trying to prohibit Uber and Lyft from operating, because the politicians are under the control of the taxicab operators and the taxicab unions. It's pure and simple crony capitalism, aka corruption.

The federal government created Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac as private companies to buy mortgages from banks, with the goal of increasing mortgage availability for the middle class. These organizations soon became corrupted and drove much of their competition out of business because they were able to offer lower interest rates due to their “implicit” government guarantee. Members of their boards were appointed by people in government rather than only by their private stockholders. Millions of campaign donations were given by Fannie and Freddie to maintain their privileged status. When they predictably collapsed, the taxpayers were left with the bill, but the corrupt and incompetent managers and the politicians who benefited walked away. Congress, rather than using the bankruptcy laws as a reason to abolish Fannie and Freddie, instead renewed them — so the same play can happen again. When President Trump and others talk about the “swamp” of Washington, much of what they are referring to is crony capitalism. From the time of organized governments, rulers found it useful to make special deals with merchants. The father of modern economics, Adam Smith, in his great classic, “Wealth of Nations” published in 1776, had many warnings about the dangers of business people colluding among themselves or with government officials against the interests of the people. This was long before Karl Marx labeled the naturally evolved private economic system as “capitalism.”

What is often overlooked is that Smith had a great influence on the American Founding Fathers. They had read his book. Benjamin Franklin was a personal friend of Smith. Smith's descriptions of how those in business and government collude reinforced the Founders' belief that a system of limited government with many checks and balances was the best hope to limit corruption (crony capitalism) and ensure liberty.

A government that spends trillions of dollars and controls the fate of tens of millions of businesses and individuals through regulation is nothing more than a gigantic honey pot for those who seek to gain without engaging in productive activity.