

Exclusive – Josh Hawley: Big Tech Has an ‘Army of Swamp Creatures’ Fighting Regulation, Antitrust

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Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) told Breitbart News in an exclusive interview Wednesday that big tech has an “army of swamp creatures” fighting any calls for antitrust investigations and regulation of America’s largest technology companies.

Hawley spoke to Breitbart News over a wide-ranging series of topics, including the future of the Republican Party and populism, big tech, and immigration. The Missouri conservative told Breitbart News that if the GOP wants to have a “future,” it will have to become a “movement of working people.”

During Hawley’s tenure in Congress, he has become one of Congress’s leading critics of big tech, chastising America’s largest tech companies such as Google, Facebook, Amazon, Apple, and Twitter for their censorship practices, their privacy violations, their dominance on the Internet, as well as their fostering social media addicts.

Hawley has proposed several bills to fight big tech’s dominance on the Internet.

Hawley proposed the Ending Support for Internet Censorship Act, which would audit social media companies for bias, and if regulators found bias in either the big tech companies’ algorithms or content moderation processes, those companies would lose their Section 230 immunity. President Donald Trump praised the legislation as “very important” during a social media summit at the White House, and a poll found that nearly a majority of Americans backed the bill.

Further, the Missouri senator has proposed legislation that would rein in big tech’s collection and monetization of Americans’ private data. Hawley also introduced a bill to curb Americans’ social media addiction.

While the Missouri senator has proposed many solutions that would end “big tech’s assault on free speech,” address big tech’s privacy violations, and curb social media addiction, the Missouri senator has faced strong resistance from what he has called “supposedly” conservative and libertarian organizations that have resisted his calls to address the ill effects of big tech.

Hawley told Breitbart News that he believes that much of the big tech resistance results from big tech’s funding of think tanks, lobbyists, and other political entities in D.C. to fight any calls to rein in America’s largest technology companies.

When it comes to the “think tank world,” Hawley said, “Google and Facebook have purchased enormous influence, their own sycophants; they purchased economists; they have funded think

tanks. It's unbelievable. I give them credit, they know how to play the swamp game. They have an army of swamp creatures who are out there singing the party line — the big tech line.”

Google and Facebook's influence in D.C. also extends to conservative and libertarian-leaning organizations as well. Recent reports have revealed that Google provides “substantial funding” to the R Street Institute, TechFreedom, the Cato Institute, and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). Google, as well as Facebook, also donate to the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI).

Ahead of the White House's social media summit in July, the Heritage Foundation, which receives donations from Google, decried allegedly “heavy-handed” regulations and also suggested that social media companies “are responding” to the question of censorship of conservative and alternative voices on the Internet.

Hawley continued, suggesting that many Republicans that have resisted attempts to regulate big tech have yet to realize that big tech arose as a “creation of big government.” The Missouri senator said that big tech has become dominant through Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which he described as a “taxpayer subsidy” for big tech.

Section 230 granted social media companies wide legal latitude to moderate content on their platform without receiving frivolous lawsuits. Hawley has said that Section 230 has allowed big tech to become monopolies with the “help of the federal government.”

Hawley said, “The other part of it is that some Republicans haven't appreciated the extent to which big tech is a creation of big government. They haven't seen that it's because of big government, which gave Facebook, Google, and Twitter this special immunity that has allowed them to get huge and rich and the way that they have maintained their monopoly with the active help of the federal government. This is why big tech is so threatened when you say that we should reform Section 230 and they just completely melt down; it's worth billions of dollars to them, it's unprecedented, it's basically a taxpayer subsidy.”

The Missouri populist has charged that many Republicans do not understand the history and the intention of Section 230. Hawley has said in an interview with *Wired* that, according to the Section 230's congressional findings, Congress intended for the Internet to be “a forum for a diversity of political viewpoints and a forum for cultural viewpoints and a forum for free expression.”

Hawley told Breitbart News, “I think for a lot of Republicans, they just don't understand how the law works, Section 230, and the history, and so they don't get the fact when they defend big tech, they're actually defending government-supported monopolists. They are actually working against innovation; they're actually working against competition. They're working against what's good for consumers, so you got to wake them up to that fact.”

Hawley said, “Sometimes big business squelches competition, shuts down innovation, and allies with big government.”

“As conservatives, we have to be against that, because who does that hurt? Workers. Who does that hurt? Families. Who does that hurt? Normal people,” the Missouri senator added.