



Federal regulation of Internet coming, warn FCC, FEC commissioners

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Democrats targeting content and control of the Internet, especially from conservative sources, are pushing hard to layer on new regulations and even censorship under the guise of promoting diversity while policing bullying, warn commissioners from the Federal Communications Commission and Federal Election Commission.

“Protecting freedom on the Internet is just one vote away,” said Lee E. Goodman, a commissioner on the FEC which is divided three Democrats to three Republicans. “There is a cloud over your free speech.”

Freedom of speech on the Internet, added Ajit Pai, commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission, “is increasingly under threat.”

Pai and Goodman cited political correctness campaigns by Democrats as a threat. Both also said their agencies are becoming politicized and the liberals are using their power to push regulations that impact business and conservative outlets and voices.

“One of the things that is critical for this country is to reassert the value of the First Amendment, the fact that robust discourse, that is sometimes cacophonous, is nonetheless a value, in fact it creates value,” said Pai.

At a CATO Institute discussion on online speech Wednesday night, both said that regulators are eager to issue new rules that could put limits on what people could say on blogs, online news and even YouTube. *Washington Examiner* reporter Rudy Takala and Cato’s digital manager Kat Murti were also on the panel.

Goodman drew attention to the political divide on the FEC and how Republicans have been able to block Democrats from moving against conservative media. He noted a new decision expected to be released today in which Democrats in executive session voted for the first time ever to punish a TV outlet, Fox News, for its handling of presidential debates.

That 3-3 vote killed any action against Fox, but he warned that protecting further regulation is “held together by just one vote.”

Pai said that at the FCC, “bipartisan consensus has unraveled over the last couple of years,” most notably the recent vote on net neutrality. Democrats are in control, 3-2.