

Congress of the United States  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Small Business  
2561 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-0515

July 24, 2023

Mr. James P. Rubin  
Special Envoy and Coordinator  
Global Engagement Center  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Rubin:

The Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Regulations writes to follow up on our June 7, 2023 letter requesting information on the Biden Administration's funding of entities that pressure advertising and social media companies to remove small businesses from their platforms because of their apparent political positions or the political opinions of the business owners.<sup>1</sup> To date, other than confirmation of receipt of the letter, we have not heard back; despite repeated attempts to reach your staff for an update. The requested documents were due back to us no later than June 21, 2023. The documents requested were intentionally narrowly tailored to enable a quick response. There is no excuse for failing to timely fulfill the Committee's request or failing to provide staff an update on the status of the response.

Since our initial letter establishing this investigation, a preliminary injunction on the Biden Administration's proxy suppression of speech has been placed through *State of Missouri et al. v. Joseph R. Biden, et al.*, and the Administration's Motion to Stay has been denied.<sup>2</sup> Members of your staff were explicitly named in the judgement concerning what the judge called arguably "the most massive attack against free speech in United States' history".<sup>3</sup> The Committee's request is now more timely than ever.

As previously mentioned, this Committee wishes to understand the use of any Global Engagement Center funding of entities whose actions have resulted in small businesses' loss of economic opportunities from the freedom of engaging in uncensored speech on online platforms.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Roger Williams, *et al.*, Chairman, H. Comm. on Small Bus., to James P. Rubin, Special Envoy and Coordinator, Global Engagement Center, U.S. Dep't of State (Jun. 7, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> *State of Missouri, et al. v. Joseph R. Biden Jr., et al.*, No. 3:22-cv-01213-TAD-KDM (W.D. La. filed Jul. 4, 2023); see also *State of Missouri, et al. v. Joseph R. Biden Jr., et al.*, No. 3:22-cv-01213-TAD-KDM (W.D. La. filed Jul. 10, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

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The federal government cannot circumvent constitutional protections by using private actors to accomplish what the State itself is prohibited from doing.<sup>4</sup>

The Committee is reiterating its request for the following documentation as soon as possible and would appreciate your prompt attention:

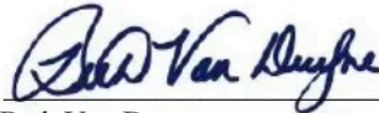
1. Unredacted list of all GEC grant recipients and associated award numbers from FY 2019 – present.
2. Unredacted copies of all GEC Award Purpose and Objective Alignment documents from FY 2019 – present.

To schedule the delivery of your response or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact the Committee on Small Business Staff at (202) 225-5821. The Committee on Small Business has broad authority to investigate “problems of all types of small business” under House Rule X. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



Roger Williams  
Chairman  
Committee on Small Business



Beth Van Duyne  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight,  
Investigations, and Regulations

cc: The Honorable Nydia M. Velasquez, Ranking Member  
Committee on Small Business

The Honorable Kweisi Mfume, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Regulations

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<sup>4</sup> *Norwood v. Harrison*, 413 U.S. 455, 465 (1973), “The government “may not induce, encourage, or promote private persons to accomplish what it is constitutionally forbidden to accomplish.”; *Biden v. Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia Univ.*, 141 S. Ct. 1220, 1226 (2021), A private entity thus violates the First Amendment “if the government coerces or induces it to take action the government itself would not be permitted to do, such as censor expression of a lawful viewpoint.” (Thomas, J., concurring).