



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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STATE REP. CHIP BROWN SPONSORS “ANTI-CENSORSHIP” LEGISLATION TARGETING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND FORUMS

State Rep. Chip Brown (R - Hollinger’s Island) on Monday announced he is sponsoring legislation that will withdraw state tax abatements and other economic incentives from websites and social media companies that seek to censor the free speech rights of platform participants.

House Bill 213 exempts speech inciting violence from the censorship ban.

“Rather than focusing solely upon posts and comments that pose a true danger to the public, social media platforms and other websites have used the recent change in presidential administrations as an excuse to censor and remove any speech that simply contradicts their privately-held political beliefs,” Brown said. “Our nation was built upon a firm foundation of freedom of speech, and any company that seeks to erode that foundation must not be rewarded with tax breaks and other economic incentives.”

Under the provisions of Brown’s measure, which is titled the “Anti-Censorship Act,” an individual or entity operating a social engagement website or forum may not receive “any tax abatement, credit, or incentive from the state or a local government” if they censor the speech of its participants unless it is clearly deemed “an incitement to violence.”

Likewise, any entity or website that engages in censorship after already receiving economic incentives will be required to refund the incentives in their entirety.

“Citizens should not be required to pass a political purity test in order to post or comment on any public website,” Brown said. “Allowing ‘Big Tech’ billionaires and their employees to serve as speech police sets a dangerous and oppressive precedent that runs counter to the liberties that our Constitution and Bill of Rights guarantee us.”

Brown’s legislation will be considered during the 2021 regular legislative session, which is scheduled to convene on Tuesday, February 2.

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