

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article9182>



USA

Trump Working to End Free Speech in America

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP608 - September 2025 -

Publication date: Sunday 21 September 2025

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President Donald Trump, has begun a campaign to end free speech in America. Free speech is not only protected in the U.S. Constitution and in law, but also part of American history and culture. But Trump is not literally censoring the content, but rather using his personal wealth or the government's economic power to intimidate the media, universities, and law firms.

Controlling TV

Last week Trump and his administration brought about the immediate and permanent firing of Jimmy Kimmel, a late-night comedian who engaged in scathing comic criticism of Donald Trump. Kimmel made a joke suggesting that Tyler Robinson, the assassin of rightwing podcaster Charlie Kirk, might be "one of them" and the far-right took umbrage. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chair Brendan Carr immediately suggested Jimmy Kimmel should be suspended. The FCC has no legal control over media content, but Carr implied that if the company did not comply, the network and its affiliates might lose its broadcasting license. So, ABC, the American Broadcasting Company, now owned by the Walt Disney Company, fired Kimmel who had about 1.7 million viewers each night.

In July CBS, the Columbia Broadcasting Network, now owned by Paramount Global, had already fired Stephen Colbert, effective May 2026 when his contract ends. Colbert, with three million viewers, is also a scathing comic critic of Trump, though CBS claimed he was being fired for economic reasons. Both networks, ABC and CBS, depend upon the FCC to carry out multi-billion-dollar deals, mergers and acquisitions in which they were engaged, that require its approval.

TV broadcasters had already yielded to Trump. In July of 2025 CBS parent, Paramount Global, paid \$16 million to Trump for supposedly editing an interview with Kamala Harris, his rival for the presidency, in ways that benefitted her and disadvantaged him. And in December 2024 ABC made a \$15 million donation to the Trump presidential library in payment for supposedly defaming him for remarks about Trump having been found libel in a civil suit for raping writer E. Jean Carroll. Both corporations were widely criticized for settling these specious suits.

Suing the Newspapers

Trump has also gone after print media. In July Trump filed a suit against The Wall Street Journal, News Corporation, and owner Rupert Murdoch for publishing an account of the birthday card that Trump sent to and signed for convicted pedophile Jeffrey Epstein. The Journal is fighting the suit.

And in September 2025, Trump sued The New York Times for \$15 billion for defamation intended to harm him and his businesses before the 2024 election. A judge rejected Trump's suit and has given him a month to amend it.

Pressuring the Universities

Trump has also campaigned to change the character of U.S. colleges and universities, arguing that they are antisemitic, promote LGBT and trans “ideologies,” and that their diversity, equity and inclusion programs are racist against whites. He has said that higher education is leftwing, even Communist. He has cut hundreds of million in research funding and brought lawsuits to force universities to change their curricula and even their personnel, with some like Columbia knuckling under and others like Harvard resisting but also making concessions.

And Law Firms

Trump also went after law firms that had represented his opponents, using executive orders to deny them access to federal courthouses, to strip them of security clearances, and canceling contracts. Under such pressure, the firm Paul, Weiss agreed to provide \$40 million in pro bono legal services to causes favored by the administration. A number of other law firms fought back and won court orders to stop Trump’s harassment.

Trump now suggests that any broadcast media that criticize him should lose their licenses.

We will continue to exercise free speech in America.

21 September 2025

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