

Bill Would Force Social Media Users to Secretly Report Suspicious People to Law Enforcement

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by [MassPrivatel](#)

February 4, 2021

Senator Joe Manchin wants to bring DHS's spy on your neighbors "If You See, Something Say Something" program to social media, blogs, websites, and much more. Manchin's bill, the ["See Something, Say Something Online Act"](#) would essentially turn social media users into Federal spies by forcing them to report suspicious people to law enforcement.

Just how bad is this bill?

This bill would essentially force anyone on social media to report suspicious "transmissions" to law enforcement.

"Known Suspicious Transmission.—The term "known suspicious transmission" is any suspicious transmission that an interactive computer service should have reasonably known to have occurred or have been notified of by a director, officer, employ, agent, interactive computer service user, or State or Federal law enforcement agency."

Major Crime —The term "major crime" means a Federal criminal offense that is a crime of violence (as defined 13 in section 16 of title 18, United States Code); relating to

domestic or international terrorism (as those terms are defined in section 16 2331 of title 18, United States Code)

What exactly is a known suspicious transmission or major crime?

“Suspicious Transmission is defined as any post, private message, comment, tag, transaction, or any other user-generated content or transmission that government officials later determine commits, facilitates, incites, promotes, or otherwise assists the commission of a major crime. Major crimes are defined as anything involving violence, domestic, or international terrorism, or a serious drug offense.”

How could social media users, bloggers, web forum moderators, web conferencing users etc., know that a comment left or uttered by someone would later lead to them committing a major crime?

The See Something, Say Something Online Act would force social media users into red flagging every person's comments just in case someone commits a major crime in the future.

This bill would effectively destroy the First Amendment as we know it, dispelling any vestiges of America still being a free country.

Social media users would be forced to submit a Suspicious Transmission Activity Report (STAR) on suspicious individuals within 30 days.

“In General.—If a provider of an interactive computer service detects a suspicious transmission, the interactive computer service, including any director, officer, employee, agent, or representative of such provider, shall submit to the Department a STAR describing the suspicious transmission in accordance with this section.”

As Reason [warned](#), the See Something, Say Something Online Act would put reporting on your fellow American on steroids. It would create a glut of frivolous reports, including many that are politically motivated, or otherwise disingenuous.

Social media users and law enforcement would keep detailed personal information, including metadata of suspicious people for five years.

“Each STAR submitted under this section shall contain, at a minimum— (1) the name, location, and other such identification information as submitted by the user to the provider of the interactive computer service; (2) the date and nature of the post, message, comment, tag, transaction, or other user-generated content or transmission detected for suspicious activity such as time, origin, and destination; and (3) any relevant text, information, and metadata related to the suspicious transmission.”

“Retention Of Records –Each provider of an interactive computer service shall— (A) maintain a copy of any STAR submitted under this section and the original record equivalent of any supporting documentation for the 5-year period beginning on the date on which the STAR was submitted. (B) make all supporting documentation available to the Department and any appropriate law enforcement agencies upon request.”

No one can tell a person that they have been flagged as suspicious

“Non-Disclosure—Except as otherwise prescribed by the Attorney General, no provider of an interactive computer service, or officer, director, employee, or agent of such a provider, subject to an order under subsection (a) may disclose the existence of, or terms of, the order to any person.”

Social media users could face prosecution for not reporting suspicious people

Imagine someone leaving a comment on social media like the police suck or calling someone a bitch, twit or twat and then they go on to commit a crime in the future. Would anyone like to guess what might happen next?

Every social media user who refused to file a STAR report on a suspicious person would open themselves up to prosecution or a lawsuit.

“Compliance—Any provider of an interactive computer service that fails to report a known suspicious transmission shall not be immune from civil or criminal liability for such transmission under section 230(c) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 230(c)).”

Where does one begin when it comes to describing just how bad this bill is?

Forcing social media users to essentially submit STAR reports on people they deem as suspicious opens up a Pandora's box of problems.

Social media users who are forced into reporting on people could flag everyone's comments to guard against being prosecuted or sued. This bill, if passed as it is written, would have a devastating effect on the civil rights and freedoms of every American.

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