

Daily News Across USA

wp *Twitter warns of new violence to come, brewing again on social media, as reason for Trump ban*

Craig Timberg & Drew Harwell

Twitter's extraordinary action against President Trump Friday night was driven both by the deadly rampage of his supporters in Washington and what the company said was a looming "secondary attack" on the U.S. Capitol and state government facilities next weekend — a finding that tracks with the open threats of violence independent researchers have also found across the Web.



Eric Lee/Bloomberg Demonstrators steal a Metropolitan Police riot shield outside the U.S. Capitol building during a protest in Washington, D.C., U.S., on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021.

The U.S. Capitol was placed under lockdown and Vice President Pence left the floor of Congress as hundreds of Demonstrators swarmed past barricades surrounding the building where lawmakers were debating Joe Biden's victory in the electoral college.

Calls for widespread protests on the days leading up to the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden have been rampant online for weeks.

These demonstrations are scheduled to culminate with what organizers have dubbed a "Million Militia March" on January 20 itself, as Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris are to be sworn in on the same Capitol grounds that rioters overran on Wednesday.

As with the [online chatter](#) ahead of that assault on the Capitol, these calls to action have bristled with violent talk and vows to bring guns to Washington in defiance of the city's strict weapons laws.

Twitter cited some of these posts in its announcement Friday night stripping Trump of his account and preventing him from creating new ones in the future.

Some event listings are openly discussing delivering “justice” for [Ashli Babbitt](#), a rioter and Air Force veteran who was fatally shot by police inside the Capitol Wednesday.

“Plans for future armed protests have already begun proliferating on and off-Twitter, including a proposed secondary attack on the US Capitol and state capitol buildings on January 17, 2021,”

Twitter's announcement said Friday night, noting two recent Trump tweets it said were “likely to inspire others to replicate the violent acts that took place on January 6, 2021.”

Twitter bans Trump's account, citing risk of further violence

Citing the potential for Trump's words to incite others — even in the absence of clear references to violence — took Twitter's enforcement actions to a restrictive new level, as commentators noted Friday night.

But the fear that Trump's social media postings were [fueling violent action](#) appears to be well founded by what researchers have detailed in their monitoring of far-right conversation online.

A detailed new analysis of such posts, by [Alethea Group](#), an organization combating disinformation that draws its name from the Greek word for “truth,” found abundant evidence of threatening plans on a range of platforms large and small.

The aggressive and often hateful chatter has appeared on both mainstream sites such as Twitter and Facebook and niche, [conservative sites](#) such as The-Donald.win and Parler.

“REFUSE TO BE SILENCED,” said one online post cited by Alethea Group, calling for an “ARMED MARCH ON CAPITOL HILL & ALL STATE CAPITOLS” for January 17, the last Sunday of Trump's polarizing presidency.

Another post calling for action at “DC & All State Capitols” and signed by “common folk who are tired of being tread upon” declares: “We were warned!”

“So much of the conversation right now is the general making of threats,” said Cindy Otis, vice president for analysis at Alethea.

“There's a risk of these particular dates leading to violence because that the kind of amped-up conversation we're already seeing from people.”

Representatives for Parler did not respond Saturday morning to requests for comment. An unnamed moderator for The-Donald wrote an accusatory email in response to a request for comment that used an obscenity to describe Washington Post reporters but did not respond to the substance of the query.

The Alethea report lists events planned for Jan. 17, as well as the day before the inauguration and on Inauguration Day itself. The specified locations include the U.S. Capitol and National Mall in Washington, the Utah Capitol in Salt Lake City, and locations in Pittsburgh and Columbus, Ohio.

Some events, including an “Armed March on All State Capitals,” include localized events in all 50 states.

Police let most Capitol rioters walk away. But cellphone data and videos could now lead to more arrests.

A post about the event in Pittsburgh included pictures of stockpiles of ammunition, the Alethea report said. An online militia forum called for recruits in Kentucky because “diplomatic efforts have been exhausted.”

“A popular guerilla [sic] onslaught is a nightmare for them,” said the anonymous writer of one post on the encrypted messaging service Telegram about the scattered militia events.

“Is the military going to deploy in mass everywhere? They can’t.”

The report, while culled from public posts, also notes a shift toward communicating in closed, private groups on encrypted platforms such as Signal, suggesting there is significantly more organizing happening beyond the view of independent researchers and, likely, to authorities as well.



What President Trump Has Said About His Twitter Account Ban *Darragh Roche*

President Donald Trump has suggested he could set up his own social media site following his personal account's permanent suspension from Twitter on Friday.



Alex Wong/Getty Images

U.S. President Donald Trump works on his phone during a round table at the State Dining Room of the White House June 18, 2020 in Washington, DC. Trump has hit out at Twitter following a permanent suspension.

Trump sent a series of tweets from the official @POTUS account in an attempt to circumvent his ban, accusing the company of stifling free speech. But Twitter soon deleted the posts, which were captured in screenshots.

"As I have been saying for a long time, Twitter has gone further and further in banning free speech, and tonight, Twitter employees have coordinated with the Democrats and the Radical Left in removing my account from their platform, to silence me — and YOU, the 75,000,000 great patriots who voted for me," Trump wrote."

The president won 74,223,744 votes in the 2020 presidential election, while President-elect Joe Biden won 81,283,485.???

"Twitter may be a private company, but without the government's gift of Section 230 they would not exist for long," Trump went on.

Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act has been a bugbear from Trump and other conservatives for some time.

It states: "No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider." This offers legal protection for sites like Twitter and Facebook for what third parties post.

"I predicted this would happen," Trump said.

"We have been negotiating with various other sites, and will have a big announcement soon, while we also look at the possibilities of building out our own platform in the near future."

*Trump returns, on the @POTUS account, and says he is looking "at the possibilities of building out our own platform in the near future."
pic.twitter.com/AhbICQ82OM*

— Josh Wingrove (@josh_wingrove) January 9, 2021

"We will not be SILENCED! Twitter is not about FREE SPEECH. They are all about promoting a Radical Left platform where some of the most vicious people in the world are allowed to speak freely."

"STAY TUNED!" Trump concluded. The tweets were deleted shortly after they were posted in accordance with Twitter's policy about evading a ban. The official presidential account will be handed over to incoming Biden administration on January 20.

"As stated in our ban evasion policy, if it is clear that another account is being used for the purposes of evading a ban, it is also subject to suspension," a Twitter spokesperson told The Hill newspaper on Friday.

"For government accounts, such as @POTUS and @WhiteHouse, we will not suspend those accounts but will take action to limit their use."

Several prominent [supporters of the president have been suspended from Twitter](#) in the past week, with many moving to Parler, an alternative site popular with conservatives.

However, Trump has given no indication that he will join Parler and the site is facing pressure from [Google](#) and [Apple](#) to introduce a content moderation policy if it wants continued access to their download stores.



If Biden represents the working class, he should cancel all student debt
Amy Czulada - opinion contributor

On the campaign trail, former Vice President Joe Biden leaned heavily on his working-class roots.



Getty Images

If Biden represents the working class, he should cancel all student debt
Hailing from Scranton, Penn., he asserted that his blue collar upbringing stayed with him long after he left his hometown at the age of 10, despite being a Washington insider for 40 years.

He evoked these roots by characterizing the election as a choice between the interests of "Scranton vs. Park Avenue." If Biden represents the working class in Pennsylvania and throughout the country - as he claims - he should cancel all outstanding student debt.

*Student debt is a ballooning crisis, leaving former students with overwhelming bills that they cannot afford to pay. Nationwide, approximately 43 million borrowers owe about **\$1.7 trillion** in student loans.*

*For the graduation year 2019, **62 percent** of graduates across the country left college with an average of **\$29,076** in student debt. This means that these recent graduates, most of whom are working class by anyone's definition, make average monthly payments of \$300 on their student loans while struggling, in a down labor market, to make rent, pay for food, medical care and transportation.*

*This has only been exacerbated in the COVID-19 era, during which **one in three** households are struggling to pay their monthly bills.*

Under the [Higher Education Act](#), President-elect Biden will have the executive authority to cancel the entirety of student debt for all 43 million borrowers nationwide with the stroke of a pen.

In the current political moment, Biden has expressed an interest in [canceling](#) \$10,000 per borrower, while other leaders in the Democratic party have advocated for [\\$50,000](#) per borrower.

A \$10,000 cancellation might stave off an impending economic crisis in the short term.

But given that four out of 10 borrowers are at risk of [default by 2023](#) and will likely be in the same situation in a few years. Ten thousand dollars is not enough. Canceling student debt would provide an enormous stimulus to the economy, which is currently facing the [worst conditions](#) since the Great Depression.

It has been widely reported that millions of student loan borrowers have [delayed](#) buying houses, getting married and having children due to their debt.

It is projected that canceling student debt would provide an annual [GDP increase](#) of \$86 billion to \$108 billion, and help to close the [racial wealth gap](#) since student debt disproportionately affects students and alumni of color.

Since there are no bankruptcy protections for student debt and black graduates default at [five times](#) the rate of their white peers, canceling student debt would also help to protect black graduates from defaulting on their loans. Student debt cancellation on a broad scale would create a pathway for former student debtors to enter the economy more fully by achieving the life events they have previously shelved.

In addition to its economic advantages, broad student debt relief is politically astute. Forty three million voters nationwide would directly benefit from the cancellation and be more inclined to vote Democrat in the next election.

It would be an especially powerful inducement for younger voters, most of whom begrudgingly held their noses and voted for Biden not because his policies were popular, but because the alternative would have been four more years of President Trump.

According to a recent survey from Vox and Data for Progress , a [majority](#) of Democrats, Black voters and young voters support Biden canceling \$50,000 in student debt for households that make under \$125,000 annually.

[Critics](#) of student debt cancellation argue that doing so rewards the lazy and financially irresponsible. Yet, most borrowers are barely able to touch the principal of their loans through their monthly payments.

Wages have stagnated over the past [40 years](#) and haven't risen to meet inflation, let alone the ever-rising cost of higher education, which has nearly doubled since the

1980s. To compare the price of education to wages over time, the cost of education has risen *eight times faster* than wages.

According to *data* from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), since 1979 wages for the so-called middle class have only increased 6 percent - less than 0.2 percent each year - while low-wage workers' wages have decreased 5 percent. Student debtors simply haven't been paid wages sufficient to meet their basic needs.

Some *critics argue* that student debt cancellation is a regressive policy because it would primarily serve the highest earners among us, and others claim that canceling debt now would not be fair to all the people who paid back their student debt.

While broad student debt relief would cancel debt for high earners as well, the policy would be *most effective* in wiping out debt for those with the highest debt-to-income ratios, as it would slash their total debt from above their annual income to one-fifth of their income.

Finally, for all who claim it wouldn't be fair to those who have already paid back their loans, by that logic, we shouldn't enact any policy that would ever better lives because it wouldn't be fair to the people who came before.

Canceling student debt would be a lifeline to working people across the United States, enabling millions of people to participate in the economy fully and no longer be saddled with the debt that holds them back.

After all, the working class comes in many different shapes and sizes these days; it's not just a group of men mining coal or forging steel or assembling automobiles. Some have college degrees and work in offices, restaurants, hospitals, supermarkets and schools.

If Biden wants to win the support of the entire working class he should relieve us of the burden of student debt so that we can do more than just survive - we can live.

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