

***That the de-platforming of Donald Trump was harmful to democracy.***

1. **Type of Topic:** This is an empirical “test” debate; both teams are debating the truth of a statement. Neither team should propose a model, or any policy change; instead, each team must create a test which contains prongs (sub-statements) that if proven true, validate the overall statement. It is crucial to understand that the debate is not centred around whether Trump’s de-platforming was good overall, instead it is only focused on the effects on democracy. The affirmative must create a test and prove each of the prongs true to show it was harmful, whilst the negative can either completely disagree with the affirmative’s test and instead propose their own, add/edit a prong, or accept the test (each decision must be justified). Test debates have two key parts – firstly, each team must argue why their test is better in terms of proving if it was harmful or not, and secondly, they must argue why the test prongs are fulfilled/not fulfilled to determine the truth of the statement.
2. **Background/Context:** Donald Trump was banned from Facebook and Twitter in the wake of the January 6 Capitol Riots. Twitter was one of Trump’s key methods in spreading his statements, reaching millions of people, and thus the removal of his account had a significant impact. Whilst some argue this was justified due to the effect of his statements, others believe this restriction of free speech was more harmful to democracy. Trump made various comments in rallies and on Twitter, which arguably contributed to the incitement of the violent Capitol Riots (seven were killed), where the protestors looked to overturn the election results. Despite this, the action from Twitter and Facebook is still definitively a restriction of freedom of speech, and although Trump has other methods of communication, since this action, his total outreach has decreased. Freedom of speech is essential to democracy and is instrumental in maintaining “power to the people”. However, many of his comments incited protests looking to overturn an election, the direct result of a democracy, and others also claim that other comments led to attacks on the marginalised.
3. **Specific Questions for Consideration**
  - What were the effects of Trump’s Twitter comments on the Capitol Riots as well as other instances of violence or hate?
  - What are some other examples of the restriction of certain rights fundamental to democracy for other purposes? Is it ever valid to restrict a fundamental right such as freedom of speech? Why?
  - How effective was the de-platforming? Does he still broadcast his message?
  - Is it justified to restrict anti-democratic comments (e.g. overturning an election)? What about hate speech?

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