

## Statement on Facebook Targeting and Censorship:

My name is **Jim Hoft** and I am the owner-editor of **The Gateway Pundit** website based in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Gateway Pundit was launched in 2004 and at the time had two or three daily readers. The website has grown in popularity over the years. In the fall of 2016 before the presidential election The Gateway Pundit had nearly one million readers a day. One-third of the traffic, nearly 33%, at that time came from Facebook.

The Gateway Pundit spent \$70,000 advertising on Facebook in 2015 resulting in 600,000 Facebook likes and supporters.

In 2017 Harvard's Berkman Klein Center<sup>1</sup> and Columbia Journalism Review<sup>2</sup> ranked The Gateway Pundit as the 4<sup>th</sup> most influential conservative news source<sup>3</sup> in 2016.

In January 2017, Facebook began making algorithm changes to make sure conservative news was no longer so influential. The Gateway Pundit Facebook traffic has consistently decreased with each algorithm change.

A March 2018 study by The Outline organization<sup>4</sup> found conservative publishers were hit the hardest by Facebook algorithm changes. The study also showed that The Gateway Pundit was hit the hardest.

In March 2018 Western Journal<sup>5</sup> also published a study that found conservative publishers were hit the hardest by the recent Facebook algorithm changes. The report found that liberal publishers actually saw a 2 percent increase in traffic. Conservative publishers lost an average of 14 percent in traffic.

Today our Facebook traffic is less than 3 percent of our total traffic.

Facebook has become the public square and "utility" that its founder envisioned. As a utility, it should not be able to censor conservative content, just like the phone company cannot censor what is said over the phone.

Despite its public statements, Facebook has chosen a side.

Today we are asking Congress to act on its responsibility to ensure the public square of Facebook is fair and open to all voices.

Today we are asking for Congress to act against Facebook.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cyber.harvard.edu/publications/2017/08/mediacloud>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cjr.org/analysis/breitbart-media-trump-harvard-study.php>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2017/08/study-how-the-gateway-pundit-helped-president-donald-trump-win-the-2016-us-presidential-election/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://theoutline.com/post/3599/conservative-publishers-hit-hardest-by-facebook-news-feed-change?zd=2&zi=aj24p267>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.westernjournal.com/confirmed-facebooks-recent-algorithm-change-is-crushing-conservative-voices-boosting-liberals/>