

Stop the censorship of COVID-19 whistleblower Rebekah Jones!

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On Monday, Twitter suspended the account of Rebekah Jones, the data scientist and prominent opponent of the “herd immunity” policies that led to the deaths of more than 600,000 people in the United States. Twitter has provided no explanation of its suspension of Jones’s account, saying only that the data scientist was reportedly suspended due to “spam and platform manipulation.”

Jones’s suspension from Twitter comes less than 10 days after she was officially recognized as a whistleblower by the state of Florida. On May 28, the state’s Office of the Inspector General informed Jones that her whistleblower complaint demonstrates “reasonable cause to suspect that an employee or agent of an agency or independent contractor has violated any federal, state or local law, rule or regulation.”

Twitter’s silencing, with no serious explanation, of an officially recognized whistleblower, a leading expert on the COVID-19 pandemic, and a political opponent of a policy that has led to countless unnecessary deaths, must be opposed. The removal of her account is an intolerable attack both on her own democratic rights and on the right of the public to scientific information regarding the ongoing pandemic.

Responding to Jones’s suspension, the office of Florida governor and Trump acolyte Ron DeSantis gloated, “This decision was long overdue. ... Rebekah Jones is the Typhoid Mary of COVID-19 disinformation and has harmed many hardworking DOH employees with her defamatory conspiracy theories.”

The *Miami Herald* reported that the suspension occurred after Jones attempted to share an interview she held with the newspaper about her firing at the Florida Department of Health (DOH) and the fascistic raid that was launched on her home in early December of 2020.

The raid was ordered by Governor Ron DeSantis in response to Jones’s efforts to expose the true scale of COVID-19 deaths and infections in the state. Jones

achieved national attention in subsequent months from her vocal opposition to the premature reopening of schools and businesses as the pandemic surged.

Jones was initially fired from her job as a data analyst for the DOH after rejecting requests to falsely inflate the number of coronavirus tests and decrease the count of daily infections. This initiative was fueled by a politically motivated campaign to remove all restrictions on the spread of COVID-19, above all to facilitate the reopening of schools and non-essential production.

Florida’s DeSantis has been among the most avid adherents of the policy of “herd immunity,” which has meant removing all scientifically guided health measures that impede the flow of corporate profit-making and the relentless extraction of wealth from having workers risk their lives in workplaces where the virus has run rampant. This policy has been embraced by both the Democrats and Republicans and dictated by the class interests of the ruling elite, whose fortunes have skyrocketed during the pandemic.

Jones having her social media presence restricted is the latest development in a wave of provocative steps that have been taken by the political establishment and substantial sections of the corporate media to suppress dissenting views and criticisms of its unscientific pandemic policies.

The basis for DeSantis’s unrelenting attacks against the whistleblower has been Jones’s efforts to inform the public of the true spread of the coronavirus in schools and workplaces around the country along with her consistently refuting the unsafe policies guiding the abandonment of measures aimed at containing the pandemic.

Under Florida’s state statutes, political officials are prohibited from attempts to threaten or intimidate whistleblowers.

From the moment Jones was fired, she became the target of a vicious and violent campaign from the right-

wing DeSantis to silence any opposition to the drive to reopen the economy and schools while browbeating her into submission.

The gestapo-like siege that was launched against Jones last December involved Florida state police barging into Jones's home, with guns drawn, arbitrarily seizing her phone, computer and other technical equipment in order to prevent her from continuing to publish data on COVID-19 outbreaks. The raid was an outright attack on the right to free speech and aimed at suppressing all credible science refuting the murderous policies of the ruling class.

The invasion of Jones's residence was immediately followed by an arrest warrant issued by the state in January on the spurious charge that Jones gained unauthorized access to state health department software and sent a mass text to thousands of employees urging them to speak out publicly against the government's coronavirus policies.

Workers around the world have expressed their support for Jones, including a December 2020 statement by nurses, doctors, and other health workers in Sri Lanka, who declared their opposition to "the fascistic attack on Rebekah Jones, a prominent data scientist and COVID-19 whistleblower."

Teachers in Melbourne, Australia, issued a statement on December 22 condemning the police raid against Jones. "Educators internationally must come to the defence of Jones and all whistleblowers fighting for full transparency and reporting of all data on COVID-19."

With the ruling class's abandonment of effectively all measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 at workplaces and schools, workers' right to information about the pandemic is all the more critical. For this reason, it is vital to demand the reinstatement of Jones's Twitter account and to oppose all threats and intimidation directed at scientists.



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