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## INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY

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# No Surprise Democrats Threaten Internet Free Speech

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"Some of my colleagues seem to believe that the same political message that would require disclosure if run on television should be... [View Enlarged Image](#)

**First Amendment:** A Democratic Federal Election Commission member vows to regulate "the Internet's growing force in the political arena." This is a significant development. Government by the people itself is threatened.

The political forces seeking ever bigger government, taking more of your money, and intruding deeper into your life will stop at nothing in retaining and expanding their power.

Further proof came Friday when, after a deadlocked FEC vote that barred restrictions on Internet speech, the commission's vice chair, Democrat Ann Ravel, ominously remarked that next year things will be different.

"Some of my colleagues seem to believe that the same political message that would require disclosure if run on television should be categorically exempt from the same requirements when placed in the Internet alone," she said in a statement. "As a matter of policy, this simply does not make sense."

Educated at the University of California, Berkeley, then the University of California's Hastings Law School, New Yorker Ravel has been a government lawyer of one kind or another since 1977. The Obama administration brought her into the Justice Department in 2009, before giving her an FEC seat.

FEC Chairman Lee Goodman, a Republican appointed by President Obama last year, warned of the chilling consequences of Ravel's idea to regulate political speech appearing on the Internet — on sites turned to daily by many millions of people around the world, such as the Drudge Report and YouTube.

"I think this portends a great threat," Goodman told Fox News. "If the Federal Election Commission were to start regulating all of those blogs and websites and social media pages, I can't imagine what it would take. It would probably require a team of government regulators culling the Internet daily to look for violators, to look for people who aren't reporting their expenditures online."

Goodman noted that "the little guys compete with the big boys on an even playing field on the Internet."

"I don't think," he said, "we have constitutional authority" to do what Ravel suggests.

Make no mistake: This is a direct assault on the freedoms of political speech that have been the birthright for every American since the Constitution was ratified.

But since when has the Constitution stopped those seeking to regulate political speech?

As Robert Mutch points out in his liberal history of campaign finance reform, "Buying The Vote," the debate over

regulating political speech remains, as it has always been, "between egalitarian and inegalitarian visions of democracy."

So when the Internet megaphone empowers those who oppose Big Government, Big Government is sure to grab it away and threaten its users.

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