



July 5, 2023

APSA Statement on Legal Action Taken Against Disinformation Researchers

The American Political Science Association (APSA) is deeply troubled by recent reports that a targeted legal campaign is being levied against researchers and institutions that study the spread of disinformation. According to [reports from the New York Times](#), the targeted researchers and institutions have been inundated with requests for information and subpoenas regarding disinformation research into the 2020 presidential election, citing baseless claims of their research being used to engage in political censorship. These claims are demonstrably false, and the time and effort required by these researchers to comply with these legal challenges interferes with researchers' ability to focus their attention on disinformation in the 2024 election cycle. This frivolous campaign is a blatant attempt to chill research and basic academic freedom.

Furthermore, this campaign does a great disservice to the health of our democracy. Disinformation research, or the study of the intentional dissemination of inaccurate information, is a critical field of study in understanding how falsehoods spread and ensuring the general public is properly equipped to best make decisions. Disinformation research provides invaluable insight on how to best prepare the general public to be informed participants each election cycle; the ability for researchers to study disinformation around elections is critical not only for the advancement of the political science discipline, but for the stewardship of democracy.

APSA condemns this legal campaign and expresses support for the affected researchers and efforts to protect the principles of academic freedom.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lisa Martin'.

Lisa Martin
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mark E. Warren'.

Mark E. Warren
President-Elect

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Ishiyama'.

John Ishiyama
Past President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Steven Rathgeb Smith'.

Steven Rathgeb Smith
Executive Director

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Founded in 1903, the American Political Science Association is the leading professional organization for the study of political science and serves more than 13,000 members in more than 80 countries. With a range of programs and services for individuals, departments, and institutions, APSA brings together political scientists from all fields of inquiry, regions, and occupational endeavors within and outside academe to deepen our understanding of politics, democracy, and citizenship throughout the world.