

RFK Jr. and Elon Musk Discuss 'Reclaiming Democracy'

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › June 5, 2023, Democrat presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Elon Musk co-hosted a live Twitter discussion about issues they believe ought to be at the forefront of the political debate going into the 2024 presidential election
- › Topics covered included free speech versus censorship, the destruction of democracy, the Ukraine war, foreign policy, the humanitarian crisis at the border, COVID, the link between mass shootings and antidepressants, the dangers of artificial intelligence (AI) and more
- › If elected president, Kennedy will issue an executive order forbidding federal agencies from participating in any efforts to censor speech by the American public
- › Kennedy is adamant about stopping the ever-growing influx of illegal immigrants across the southern border and is currently formulating policies to make the border "impervious," while simultaneously opening up legal immigration pathways
- › Kennedy also wants to shut down gain-of-function research and bioweapons development

June 5, 2023, Democrat presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Elon Musk co-hosted a live Twitter discussion with Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, venture capitalist David Sacks, investigative journalist Michael Shellenberger and securities attorney Omeed Malik, about issues they believe ought to be at the forefront of the political debate going into the 2024 presidential election.

Topics covered included free speech versus censorship, the destruction of democracy, the Ukraine war, foreign policy, the humanitarian crisis at the border, COVID, the link between mass shootings and antidepressants, the dangers of artificial intelligence (AI) and more.

Media Bias

Not surprisingly, the liberal media chastised Kennedy for championing “right-wing ideas and misinformation” during the interview. In fact, that was The New York Times’ headline.¹

The NYT went on to smear Kennedy as “a leading vaccine skeptic” who promotes “conspiracy theories” and “sounded like a candidate ... in the mushrooming Republican presidential contest.” Translation: He’s a rational realist who doesn’t shy away from difficult truths and inconvenient facts.

“He said he planned to travel to the Mexican border this week to ‘try to formulate policies that will seal the border permanently,’ called for the federal government to consider the war in Ukraine from the perspective of Russians and said pharmaceutical drugs were responsible for the rise of mass shootings in America,” The NYT complained, adding:

“He claimed, without evidence, that ‘COVID was clearly a bioweapons problem.’ American intelligence agencies do not believe there is any evidence indicating that is the case.”

Similarly, CNN wrote Kennedy off as a “marginal candidate who espouses debunked medical claims,” complaining he “attacked the closing of churches, social distancing and government track-and-trace surveillance.”²

I suggest listening to the discussion for yourself, as most mainstream media reporting on it didn’t do it justice. Below, I’ll review some of the key issues discussed, with a focus on Kennedy’s stances and election promises, seeing how the establishment is doing everything in their power to prevent people from learning what he stands for.

Kennedy on Social Media Censorship

Proving the ties between the Biden administration and Big Tech are still alive and well in the post-COVID era, Instagram recently suspended Kennedy's official presidential campaign page, after reinstating his personal page, which had been banned for the last couple of years. Kennedy commented:

"I was evicted from Instagram ... in the spring of 2021. The day I was evicted, I had about 770,000 [followers], but I had been up to 900,000. Whenever I hit 900,000, they would cut them back to 800,000 or 700,000, so I was losing followers all the time.

They said it was because I was promoting misinformation. But the term is 'information,' and [has] nothing to do with ... factual accuracy or inaccuracy. It was simply a euphemism for any statement that departed from the government orthodoxies and government proclamations ...

Since I've declared the presidency [run], now we have about 50 people working for the campaign, and each of those people has an Instagram handle – for example, my daughter-in-law is Amaryllis@TeamKennedy.com – and when they attempted to register, Instagram would send them a flag saying 'You've been suspended for 180 days.'

So, none of them were allowed on. And, of course, that's illegal under Section 413 of the Code of Federal Regulations, which regulates speech. It protects speech during presidential and other federal election campaigns ...

But I don't want to be pointing the finger at Meta right now, because I think it's time for healing in this country. I'm happy that I've been reinstated, and they gave me back all my old posts, and all my old followers ..."

If elected president, Kennedy vows to call the heads of all social media companies into the Oval Office and "not walk out until we have figured out how to make this work and make it consistent with democracy."

Like Sachs, Kennedy doesn't believe that social media companies want to censor any of their users. Rather, they're pressured to do so by advertisers and the government itself, which is using private companies to circumvent the U.S. Constitution. Were social media companies to continue censoring anyway, then turning them into common carriers could be one solution.

"I'm pretty much a free speech absolutist," Kennedy said, "and I think the remedy for misinformation is more information, and the remedy for bad speech is more speech. It's never censorship. Censorship is by far the worst solution. There are forms of speech that are not protected, [such as] inciting violence [and] pedophilia ... and you can censor those.

But if it's protected speech, I don't think it should be censored. But I think in any case, we should understand the logic, the algorithms and the methodologies, and we should all have access to those. That's key, because these institutions are now the public square. They are a place where speech takes place ... and we have to figure out a way to integrate them into our democratic values system."

Musk is also adamant about the need for free speech. "I think if we don't protect free speech at all costs, we don't have a functioning democracy. If we don't have a functioning democracy, nothing else matters," Musk said. Ironically, since his acquisition of Twitter, the Democratic Party and its press allies have routinely portrayed Musk as a "threat to democracy," primarily based on his support of free speech.

How Do We Combat Government Capture of Corporations?

Malik also brought up an interesting point. Kennedy has frequently discussed the problems we have with regulatory capture – the fact that most of our regulatory agencies, including the FDA, CDC and EPA are controlled by the very industries they're supposed to regulate.

As a result, there's no one to make sure the public is not harmed by dangerous drugs, vaccines and chemicals. But a reverse kind of capture has also taken place, as elements

within the federal government are pressuring private companies to violate the Bill of Rights on the government's behalf, while pretending these companies are doing it of their own volition.

"How do we prevent our Bill of Rights from being violated by private actors when the government uses them to do their dirty work?" Malik asked Kennedy. "I'm not just talking about censorship here. I'm actually talking about the deprivation of economic liberty."

Kennedy replied:

"In terms of the role of these agencies in compelling behavior from U.S. corporations, it is appalling, and as soon as I get into office, I'm going to issue an executive order forbidding the federal agencies – whether it's NIH, the CIA, the FBI – from participating in any efforts to censor speech by the American public, or to compel other behavior from the American public that is not legally required.

That's what we saw during the pandemic. We saw it in the vaccine mandates, and we saw it in the censorship of speech. I will forbid that, and make sure that it does not happen [again], at least not during my term in office. Immediately, the first week I'm in office, I will sign that executive order."

Kennedy on the Border Crisis

Kennedy is also adamant about stopping the steady and ever-growing influx of illegal immigrants across the southern border.

"We need to seal our border," Kennedy said. "A key existential function for every nation in the world is to be able to control immigration at its borders ... Having millions of people ... flowing across the border is not something any nation can or should put up with.

Worst of all, it's created a humanitarian crisis ... The notion that we have an open border is now a gospel around the world so that people are flying in from all over the world, from Europe, from China, from Asia ... and being assisted by nonprofit groups and by government groups to actually make their way to the United States' border within buses, and that needs to be shut down.

We have people in this country who are poverty-stricken and who don't have access, because of the paucity of public assistance ... to public assistance.

We need to be protecting the people in this country, in our urban populations, rural populations. Seventy percent of Americans could not put their hand on \$1,000 if there's an emergency. We don't have the capacity to support this huge flood of new immigrants that's coming into our cities and stressing the school systems, stressing the social service systems for ... Americans who are already struggling. It needs to be turned off.

Over the next three days I'll be meeting with people from the border patrol and elsewhere to try to formulate policies that will seal the border permanently ... That's what I will do as President. I will make that border impervious ... I will also open up legal immigration, so that the immigration that we do need, that's going to be beneficial to our country and economy, will continue."

Kennedy Wants to Shut Down Gain-of-Function Research

Kennedy is equally adamant about shutting down gain-of-function research, which is nothing more than a convenient cover for bioweapons development. According to Kennedy, the CIA continued developing bioweapons in secret after the Biological Weapons Convention went into force in 1975, and never stopped.

"We should shut the whole thing down," Kennedy said. "COVID was clearly a bioweapons problem and you saw what that did to us. What if it was a real disease? A disease that had a 50% mortality like dengue fever or Ebola, or ... one of these other real deadly viruses?"

They got those in the labs too ... Let's shut it down around the world. Let's have a real shutdown of all bioweapons development ... and make sure that one country does not develop a weapon that is going to kill all the rest of us."

Kennedy also stressed that, as we now face true existential threats such as bioweapons and AI, we must get off our war footing, as the constant threat of war "gives these institutions the excuse to be super secret and nontransparent and put us in a security state where they can develop all these crazy technologies in secret that are going to kill us all." He believes in negotiation and working with other countries, including China and Russia, to ensure that everyone benefits and prospers.

Elon Musk on Neuralink and AI

Kennedy, in turn, wanted to know how Musk, who years ago warned we should all be terrified of AI because "first, it's going to take our jobs, and then it's going to kill us," justifies being on the leading edge of that risky work.

Musk's company Neuralink received U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval at the end of May 2023 to test its implantable brain chips in human subjects.³ This is the first step in Musk's stated vision to merge and augment the human mind with AI.

"It seems to me that [Neuralink] is a technology that could potentially be really ... denigrating to democracy and human freedoms," Kennedy said. "What are your thoughts about that?" Musk replied:

"Well, first of all ... Neuralink ... is about developing brain-to-computer interfaces to allow direct communication with the brain. The neural link will progress very slowly, because anytime you have a device implanted in a human, the FDA requirements are extremely difficult ...

The first applications that we're talking about are simply enabling someone who is a quadriplegic, or paraplegic, someone who has lost the connection from their brain to their body, to be able to communicate ...

Long term, I think, it has some chance of mitigating [the] artificial intelligence existential risk by enabling a closer symbiosis of AI and humans. And I certainly agree that this is not without risk. Certainly we need to be very, very careful with how it's done ...

Looking at the advancement of artificial intelligence, I think we will probably have digital super intelligence before a neural link is sufficiently advanced to have high bandwidth communication between your cortex and the AI extension of yourself. But no question, we need to be extremely careful, and we will be extremely careful, and it will move slowly.

So, you'll definitely see it coming up. People are going to have an opportunity to object and raise concerns and issues. With Neuralink, we're also trying to be extremely 'open book,' so there's nothing hidden and we are audited extensively by the FDA.

With respect to artificial intelligence or more digital super intelligence, there are levels of artificial intelligence that are not dangerous. Like, I don't think self-driving cars are really dangerous, or having better autocorrect is dangerous. It's when you have some deep intelligence that is far smarter than the smartest human – that's where things could get dangerous.

I don't want to go too far down a rabbit hole, because that's a big one, but I think AI digital super intelligence or AGI [artificial general intelligence] is definitely a bad thing ... and that there is certainly risk of it ... acting in a manner contrary to the interests of humanity. We need to be cognizant of that risk, and we need to be very careful and thorough, and do our best to ensure that it is beneficial rather than harmful."

Kennedy expressed mild disagreement with Musk on some of these points, noting that even self-driving cars pose a significant threat to society considering some 40% of American jobs involve driving. What kind of productive work can we replace all those lost jobs with?

Kennedy on the Ukraine War

Kennedy also didn't mince words when asked to comment on the Ukraine war. He pointed out that the people of the West have been massively propagandized with "comic book depictions" of President Putin as the "bad guy" who attacked Ukraine unprovoked.

"The problem is, we're being victimized by our own agencies, which are leaving out contextual information, leaving out the nuances, leaving out the entire history in this case, of U.S. provocations, which brought us and Ukraine into a war that is not helping Ukraine.

Ukraine has now lost probably 350,000 kids, and they are in much worse position than when they began ... There's credible information that there are seven [Ukrainian] deaths for every one Russian killed. And the Ukrainians are not going to win this war. They cannot afford to win this war. This war is existential for Russia ...

We've turned this country [Ukraine] into a slaughterhouse of the flower of Ukrainian youth to benefit the geopolitical ambitions of the U.S. neocons who want to exhaust the Russian army and exercise regime change over Vladimir Putin. Ukraine is a victim in this war. It's a proxy war. It's a victim of Russia, yes ... but they're almost equally a victim of U.S. policies and ambitions and aspirations of neocons who wanted to get into this war no matter what."

Sacks agreed, saying:

"I think the war was easily avoidable if you had been willing to use diplomacy and basically give a written guarantee to the Russians that Ukraine would not become part of NATO. That is what they were demanding in December of 2021, in a written ultimatum to the White House.

Those negotiations ended when we said we wouldn't close NATO's door. The other thing we didn't do was give support to the Minsk agreements, which would have provided some limited autonomy to the ethnic Russians in the

Donbass ... If we had just done those two things, I think there's a really good chance that this war never would have occurred."

'Put Yourself in Your Adversary's Shoes'

Kennedy continued by elaborating on the importance of the Minsk agreement when it comes to reestablishing and maintaining peace with Russia:

"France agreed, Germany agreed on the Minsk accords, which was a reasonable settlement. Keep NATO out of Ukraine. My uncle, President Kennedy, used to say, 'The only way to have peace is if you put your yourself into the shoes of your adversary.'

In that speech ... he was explaining, for the first time, to the American people the role and the suffering that Russia had endured during World War II. I grew up in a generation where we were told that America had won the war against the Nazis ... Without America, the world would have been lost.

My uncle was telling the American people, that's not true. [We] beat Hitler with the Russians, and they made a sacrifice that is unimaginable to anybody else in the world. Hitler invaded Russia, through Ukraine, and killed one out of every seven Russians and leveled one-third of the nation.

He said, 'Imagine if all of the American continent, the continental United States, was reduced to rubble between the East Coast and Chicago. That's what happened to Russia. You've got to understand that if we're going to have peace with [Russia]. And we need to understand that today. We need to put ourselves in their shoes.

Either way, it's not just Putin. The Russian leadership back in 1992 made an agreement [with us]. They said, 'We will pull our 400,000 troops out of East Germany, and we will turn East Germany over to a hostile army, the NATO army. The concession that we want from you for that is that you will not move NATO

to the east,' and President Bush famously told them, 'We will not move NATO one inch to the east.'"

In short, everyone knew that inching NATO eastward would be viewed as a direct confrontation and a formula for war. Yet that's what NATO and the U.S. did. NATO kept expanding eastward, until only Ukraine was left. And that was Russia's "red line" that could not be crossed. "It's just dumbfounding," Kennedy said. "We're picking a fight with a country that has 1,000 more nuclear weapons than we do. It's just insane."

Kennedy on Gun Violence and the Second Amendment

To learn more about Kennedy's views and political stances, listen to the 2.5-hour discussion in its entirety. Epoch News' Roman Balmakov also recently interviewed Kennedy, and that interview is embedded above.

In closing, the foundational principle that guides Kennedy, no matter what the issue, is the U.S. Constitution. He views himself as a "Constitutional absolutist," so while he has grave concerns about the rise in gun violence, for example, he opposes placing restrictions on the Second Amendment.

"I want to stop the school shootings," he says, "and it comes down to protecting the schools the way that we protect airlines ... I also look very closely at the role of psychiatric drugs in these events. There are no good studies right now. That should have been done years ago on this issue, because there's tremendous circumstantial evidence that SSRIs, benzos and other drugs are doing this ...

You have to look at almost all of these drugs. If you look at our manufacturers' inserts, they include a side effect of homicidal and suicidal behavior, and prior to the introduction of Prozac, we had almost none of these events in our country ... I will do those studies immediately when I get into office ...

The only way we're ultimately going to get gun control in this country is through consensus, and that consensus cannot happen when we're all at each other's throats. We need to assure the people who feel insecure about the Constitution

that our Constitution is no longer under threat, and nobody wants to come and take away their guns.

That will bring people to the table and say, 'OK, how do we protect our children?' And that's what I'm going to try to do as president."

Sources and References

- ¹ [New York Times June 5, 2023](#)
- ² [CNN June 5, 2023](#)
- ³ [Observer June 5, 2023](#)