

Powerful Internet Propaganda Page Faces Closure In Lawsuit

An instrument of Republican Party propaganda could be shut down forever as a result of a million dollar suit filed by two Establishment newspapers.

EXCLUSIVE TO AMERICAN FREE PRESS

By Jack Ross

Free Republic, one of the most widely read web pages of Republican Party propaganda, may be shut down imminently by court order. *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times* are suing the site's operator, Jim Robinson, for \$1 million in copyright infringement damages.

The *Post* and *The Times* are asserting that Free Republic's broad censorship policy violates its status as an "educational resource" and therefore is not exempt from copyright law, charging that Free Republic is not educational but simply seeks to further its own political agenda.

Free Republic fashions itself as an "open" forum for Internet users to post articles and comment on them. However, many others had accused site moderators and owner Robinson of arbitrarily removing reports that do not toe the Republican line.

According to Todd Brendan Fahey, a former CIA agent who now works for the Center for Libertarian Studies—much in the same way that former CIA agents work for magazines such as *The National Review* and *The Weekly Standard*—an email from Robinson stated: "Those who are coming in here to post a bunch of propaganda to smear Bush or otherwise harm the war effort are going to be deleted." Emails such as this are being used as exhibits to prove that Free Republic is not an unbiased educational forum but serves to achieve political goals and further Republican interests.

A lower court has already ruled against Robinson.

If Robinson wins on appeal, it would establish that any web site that is not for profit may use any copyrighted material from other publications for purposes of commentary. If he loses, Free Republic will likely be shut down. ★