

# RFK Jr.'s anti-vaccine group kicked off Instagram, Facebook

August 19 2022, by DAVID KLEPPER

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Attorney Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. speaks after a hearing challenging the constitutionality of the state legislature's repeal of the religious exemption to vaccination on behalf of New York state families who held lawful religious exemptions, during a rally outside the Albany County Courthouse Aug. 14, 2019, in Albany, N.Y. Instagram and Facebook have suspended Children's Health Defense from its platforms for repeated violations of its policies on COVID-19 misinformation. The nonprofit led by Robert Kennedy Jr. is regularly criticized

by public health advocates for its misleading claims about vaccines and the COVID-19 pandemic. Credit: AP Photo/Hans Pennink, File

Instagram and Facebook suspended Children's Health Defense this week after the anti-vaccine group led by Robert Kennedy Jr. repeatedly violated rules prohibiting misinformation about COVID-19.

A nonprofit, Children's Health Defense is one of the most influential anti-vaccine organizations active on [social media](#), where it has spread misleading claims about vaccines and other public health measures designed to control the pandemic.

In a statement, Kennedy compared Facebook's actions to government censorship, even though Facebook is a [private company](#) that can set and enforce its own rules about [misinformation](#).

"Facebook is acting here as a surrogate for the federal government's crusade to silence all criticism of draconian government policies," Kennedy said.

Children's Health Defense had hundreds of thousands of followers at the time of the suspension, according to a statement from the organization, which also noted that it has sued Facebook over its moderation policies.

Public health advocates and misinformation experts have criticized Facebook for not acting more swiftly to contain potentially harmful misinformation about COVID-19 and vaccines.

Karen Kornbluh, director of the Digital Innovation and Democracy Initiative at the German Marshall Fund, said too many groups like Children's Health Defense have been allowed to flourish on social media

for too long. She noted that the group remains on Twitter.



Robert F. Kennedy Jr., is broadcast on a large screen as he speaks during an anti-vaccine rally in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, Jan. 23, 2022. Instagram and Facebook have suspended Children's Health Defense from its platforms for repeated violations of its policies on COVID-19 misinformation. The nonprofit led by Robert Kennedy Jr. is regularly criticized by public health advocates for its misleading claims about vaccines and the COVID-19 pandemic. Credit: AP Photo/Patrick Semansky, File

"Today's step is too late and too little," Kornbluh said, adding that [tech companies](#) must address the reasons misinformation spreads so readily on social media.

Facebook and Instagram confirmed the company action on Thursday in a statement to The Associated Press.

"We removed these accounts for repeatedly violating our policies," a spokesman for Meta, Facebook and Instagram's [parent company](#), told the AP. Under the platforms' policies, suspensions are typically only enforced after multiple violations.

Several state affiliates of Children's Health Defense remain on Facebook and Instagram despite the ban of the national organization. Kennedy was kicked off Instagram last year but continues to keep an active account on Facebook.

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