Commerce Secretary: TikTok Could Go Dark If US Doesn’t Get Control

TikTok, which is currently operating in the U.S. courtesy of a third 90-day deadline extension, is still facing an uncertain operational future.

The social media application’s availability beyond the Sept. 17 deadline extension was thrown into more doubt after Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick’s latest remarks Thursday.

In an interview with CNBC’s Squawk on the Street, Lutnick stated that if the Chinese do not hand over more control of TikTok to the U.S., the app will end up becoming inaccessible to Americans.

“Basically, Americans will have control. Americans will own the technology. Americans will control the algorithm. That’s something (President) Donald Trump is willing to do,” Lutnick said.

He added, “TikTok is going to go dark” if the Chinese don’t approve the deal presented to them.

In 2024, Congress banned TikTok, citing concerns that it posed a national security threat due to its parent company, ByteDance, being controlled by the Chinese government, which has the capability to access the personal information of American users.

TikTok and ByteDance sued the U.S. government, challenging the ban or sale, with the case ultimately reaching the Supreme Court, where the ban, as drafted in the bill, was upheld.

During his first term, President Trump proposed a ban on TikTok, but changed his mind during his re-election campaign last year. Recognizing the benefits of the platform to his campaign, the president strongly advocated for its continued operations.

TikTok’s ban went into effect in the U.S. on Jan. 19, with the app going dark for about 14 hours starting the night of Jan. 18 before coming back online the following day, following a promise from then-President-elect Trump.

Once he returned to office, Trump issued an executive order extending the ban deadline by 75 days.

Negotiations to find a deal—which must include a separation agreement, as well as a U.S. suitor—have proven difficult, resulting in the continuing extension of the deadline and the latest declaration from Lutnick.

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/media/commerce-secretary-tiktok-could-go-dark-if-us-doesnt-get-control/