UCLA faculty gets big win in suit against Trump's university attacks

The final step is a proposed settlement that would include large payments (over $1.2 billion in UCLA's case) and a set of conditions that alter university governance and instruction. These conditions often have little to no connection with antisemitism.

While all of this was ostensibly meant to combat antisemitism, the plaintiffs in this case presented a huge range of quotes from administration officials, including the head of the Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism, saying the goal was to suppress certain ideas on campus. "The unrebutted record in this case shows that Defendants have used the threat of investigations and economic sanctions to… coerce the UC to stamp out faculty, staff, and student 'woke,' 'left,' 'anti-American,' 'anti-Western,' and 'Marxist' speech," Lin said.

And even before any sort of agreement was reached, there was extensive testimony that people on campus changed their teaching and research to avoid further attention from the administration. "Plaintiffs' members express fear that researching, teaching, and speaking on disfavored topics will trigger further retaliatory funding cancellations against the UC," Lin wrote, "and that they will be blamed for the retaliation. They also describe fears that the UC will retaliate against them to avoid further funding cuts or in order to comply with the proposed settlement agreement."

That's a problem, given that teaching and research topics are forms of speech, and therefore protected by the First

Amendment. “These are classic, predictable First Amendment harms, and exactly what Defendants publicly said that they intended,” Lin concluded.

Beyond speech

But the First Amendment isn’t the only issue here. The Civil Rights Act, most notably Title VI, lays out a procedure for cutting federal funding, including warnings and hearings before any funds are shut off. That level of coercion is also limited to cases where there’s an indication that voluntary compliance won’t work. Any funding cut would need to target the specific programs involved and the money allocated to them. There is nothing in Title VI that enables the sort of financial payments that the government has been demanding (and, in some cases, receiving) from schools.

https://arstechnica.com/science/2025/11/ucla-faculty-gets-big-win-in-suit-against-trumps-university-attacks/

US may owe $1 trillion in refunds if SCOTUS cancels Trump tariffs

US may end up owing $1 trillion in

refunds

Economists urged SCOTUS to intervene and stop Trump's attempt to seize authority to impose boundless reciprocal tariffs—arguing the economic impact "is predicted to be far greater than in two programs" SCOTUS previously struck, including the Biden administration's $50 billion plan for student loan forgiveness.

In September, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent warned justices that "the amount to be refunded could be between $750 billion and $1 trillion if the court waits until next summer before issuing a ruling that says the tariffs have to be repaid," CNBC reported.

During oral arguments, Justice Amy Coney Barrett fretted that undoing Trump's tariffs could be "messy," CNBC reported.

However, some business owners—who joined the We Pay Tariffs coalition weighing in on the SCOTUS case—told CNBC that they think it could be relatively straightforward, since customs forms contain line items detailing which tariffs were paid. Businesses could be paid in lump sums or even future credits, they suggested.

Rick Muskat, CEO of family-run shoe company DeerStags, told CNBC that his company paid more than $1 million in tariffs so far, but "it should be simple for importers to apply for refunds based on this tariff itemization." If the IRS can issue repayments for tax overpayments, US Customs should have "no problem" either, he suggested—especially since the agency automatically refunded US importers with no issue during a 2018 conflict, CNBC reported.

If there aren't automatic refunds, though, things could get sticky. Filing paperwork required to challenge various tariffs may become "time-consuming and difficult" for some businesses, particularly those dealing with large shipments where only

some products may have been taxed.

There’s also the issue that some countries’ tariffs—like China’s—changed “multiple times,” Joyce Adetutu, a partner at the law firm Vinson & Elkins, told CNBC. “It is going to take quite a bit of time untangling all of that, and it will be an administrative burden,” Adetutu said.

https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/11/tariff-refunds-may-get-messy-if-trump-loses-supreme-court-fight/

“How about no”: FCC boss Brendan Carr says he won’t end news distortion probes

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr says he won’t scrap the agency’s controversial news distortion policy despite calls from a bipartisan group of former FCC chairs and commissioners.

“How about no,” Carr wrote in an X post in response to the petition from former FCC leaders. “On my watch, the FCC will continue to hold broadcasters accountable to their public interest obligations.”

The petition filed yesterday by former FCC chairs and commissioners asked the FCC to repeal its 1960s-era news distortion policy, which Carr has repeatedly invoked in threats to revoke broadcast licenses. In the recent Jimmy Kimmel controversy, Carr said that ABC affiliates could have

licenses revoked for news distortion if they kept the comedian on the air.

The petition said the Kimmel incident and several other Carr threats illustrate "the extraordinary intrusions on editorial decision-making that Chairman Carr apparently understands the news distortion policy to permit." The petition argued that the "policy's purpose—to eliminate bias in the news—is not a legitimate government interest," that it has chilled broadcasters' speech, that it has been weaponized for partisan purposes, that it is overly vague, and is unnecessary given the separate rule against broadcast hoaxes.

"The news distortion policy is no longer justifiable under today's First Amendment doctrine and no longer necessary in today's media environment… The Commission should repeal the policy in full and recognize that it may not investigate or penalize broadcasters for 'distorting,' 'slanting,' or 'staging' the news, unless the broadcast at issue independently meets the high standard for broadcasting a dangerous hoax under 47 C.F.R. § 73.1217," the petition said.

News distortion policy rarely enforced

The petition was filed by Mark Fowler, a Republican who chaired the FCC from 1981 to 1987; Dennis Patrick, a Republican who chaired the FCC from 1987 to 1989; Alfred Sikes, a Republican who chaired the FCC from 1989 to 1993; Tom Wheeler, a Democrat who chaired the FCC from 2013 to 2017; Andrew Barrett, a Republican who served as a commissioner from 1989 to 1996; Ervin Duggan, a Democrat who served as a commissioner from 1990 to 1994; and Rachelle Chong, a Republican who served as a commissioner from 1994 to 1997.

https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/11/how-about-no-fcc-boss-brendan-carr-says-he-wont-end-news-distortion-probes/

Google claims win for everyone as text scammers lost their cloud server

The day after Google filed a lawsuit to end text scams primarily targeting Americans, the criminal network behind the phishing scams was “disrupted,” a Google spokesperson told Ars.

According to messages that the “ringleader” of the so-called “Lighthouse enterprise” posted on his Telegram channel, the phishing gang’s cloud server was “blocked due to malicious complaints.”

“We will restore it as soon as possible!” the leader posted on the channel—which Google’s lawsuit noted helps over 2,500 members coordinate phishing attacks that have resulted in losses of “over a billion dollars.”

Google has alleged that the Lighthouse enterprise is a “criminal group in China” that sells “phishing for dummies” kits that make it easier for scammers with little tech savvy to launch massive phishing campaigns. So far, “millions” of Americans have been harmed, Google alleged, as scammers disproportionately impersonate US institutions, like the Postal Service, as well as well-known brands like E-ZPass.

The company’s lawsuit seeks to dismantle the entire Lighthouse criminal enterprise, so the company was pleased to see Lighthouse communities go dark. In a statement, Halimah

DeLaine Prado, Google’s general counsel, told Ars that “this shutdown of Lighthouse’s operations is a win for everyone.

https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/11/google-claims-win-for-everyone-as-text-scammers-lost-their-cloud-server/

Ryanair tries forcing app downloads by eliminating paper boarding passes

The policy change is also meant to get people to do more with Ryanair’s app, like order food and drinks, view real-time flight information, and receive notifications during delays.

Brady said Ryanair selected the November 12 start date because it’s during what is “traditionally a slightly quieter time for travel following the busy mid-term break period.”

Inconvenience preparing for takeoff

Eliminating paper boarding passes may create numerous inconveniences. To start, not everyone wants Ryanair’s app on their personal device. And many future customers, especially those who don’t fly with Ryanair frequently or who don’t fly much at all, may be unaware of the change, creating confusion during travel, which can already be inherently stressful.

Also, there are places where Ryanair flies that don’t accept digital boarding passes, including some airports in Albania

and Morocco. In these instances, Ryanair still requires online check-ins (either via Ryanair's website or app), and then the airline will provide paper boarding passes.

People who are less technically savvy or who don't have a smart device or whose device has died won't be completely out of luck. Ryanair says it will accommodate people without access to a smartphone with "a free of charge boarding pass at the airport" if they've checked in online "before arriving at the airport."

"Nobody's going to get stranded. Nobody's going to get left behind," O'Leary said, per The Telegraph.

Despite this, some travel experts are worried about potential chaos.

"There will be absolute havoc when that takes effect," Irish travel commentator Eoghan Corry told RSVP Live in January.

Ryanair will be the first airline to do away with paper boarding passes. It already has a history with being on the ground floor of controversial digital-forward policies. Ryanair was the first airline to require people to check in online in advance or else pay a fee, as noted by The Independent.

"There'll be some teething problems," O'Leary said of moving to digital-only boarding passes.

https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2025/11/ryanair-tries-forcing-app-downloads-by-eliminating-paper-boarding-passes/

Reddit mod jailed for sharing movie sex scenes in rare “moral rights” verdict

A Reddit moderator known as “KlammereFyr” was recently convicted by a Danish court after clipping and posting hundreds of nude scenes that actresses filmed for movies and TV shows but apparently never expected to be shared out of context.

As TorrentFreak reported, dozens of actresses had complained about the mod’s sub-reddit, “SeDetForPlottet” (WatchItForthePlot), with some feeling “molested or abused.”

Demanding Danish police put an end to the forum, the Rights Alliance—representing the Danish Actors’ Association, two broadcasters, and other rightsholders—pushed for a criminal probe.

The groups argued that KlammereFyr removed the artistic context and immorally sexualized actors, sometimes by cropping scenes or “changing the lighting to accentuate certain features,” TorrentFreak reported.

To groups, it seemed clear that KlammereFyr was violating a rarely tested part of copyright law that protects artists’ “integrity” by shielding their “moral rights.”

In Denmark, the “right of integrity means that even in cases where you are allowed to make use of a work, you are not allowed to change it or use it in a way or in a context that infringes the author’s literary or artistic reputation or uniqueness,” a resource for Danish researchers noted.

Ultimately, a now 40-year-old man was charged after confessing to violating moral rights by sharing at least 347 clips featuring over 100 actresses that a Danish outlet reported were viewed 4.2 million times. He was also charged with sharing over 25 terabytes of pirated content, using a private torrent tracker called Superbits.org, TorrentFreak noted.

Following his confession, the Court of Frederiksberg convicted the Redditor, sentencing him to a seven-month conditional prison sentence, followed by 120 hours of community service. Next, the Reddit mod will face a separate civil lawsuit to determine damages, which could be substantial. Rightsholders are seeking between $2,300–$4,600 per nude clip, TorrentFreak reported, putting the maximum possible award above $1.5 million.

Landmark case may influence how US views “moral rights”

The conviction represents the “first criminal conviction” based on the Danish copyright law’s “right of respect,” TorrentFreak reported. In a statement, special prosecutor Jan Østergaard praised the court for taking the issue seriously.

https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/11/reddit-mod-jailed-for-sharing-movie-sex-scenes-in-rare-moral-rights-verdict/

US states could lose $21 billion of broadband grants

after Trump overhaul

The BEAD law is clear that the money can be used for more than sending subsidies to Internet service providers. The law says BEAD money can be allocated for connecting eligible community anchor institutions; data collection, broadband mapping, and planning; installing Internet and Wi-Fi infrastructure or providing reduced-cost broadband to multi-family buildings; and providing affordable Internet-capable devices.

The current law also says that if a state fails to use its full allocation, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) "shall reallocate the unused amounts to other eligible entities with approved final proposals." The law gives the NTIA chief latitude to spend the money for "any use determined necessary… to facilitate the goals of the Program."

Arielle Roth, who has overseen the BEAD overhaul in her role as head of the NTIA, has said she's open to sending the remaining funds to states. Roth said in an October 28 speech that the NTIA is "considering how states can use some of the BEAD savings—what has commonly been referred to as nondeployment money—on key outcomes like permitting reform" but added that "no final decisions have been made." The Ernst bill would take that decision out of the NTIA's hands.

States still waiting after Biden plans thrown out

After Congress created BEAD, the Biden administration spent about three years developing rules and procedures for the program and then evaluating plans submitted by each US state

and territory. The process included developing new maps that, while error-prone due to false submissions by ISPs, provided a more accurate view of broadband coverage gaps than was previously available.

By November 2024, the Biden administration had approved initial funding plans submitted by every state and territory. But the Trump administration rewrote the program rules, eliminating a preference for fiber and demanding lower-cost deployments.

States that could have started construction in summer 2025 had to draft new plans and keep waiting for the grant money. The Trump administration is also telling states that they must exempt ISPs from net neutrality and price laws in order to obtain grant funding.

As for when the long-delayed grants will be distributed, Roth said the NTIA is “on track to approve the majority of state plans and get money out the door this year.”

https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/11/us-states-could-lose-21-billion-of-broadband-grants-after-trump-overhaul/

You won’t believe the excuses lawyers have after getting busted for using AI

The judge in the case, Nancy Miller, was clear that “such statements display an astounding lack of awareness of

counsel’s obligations,” noting that “the responsibility for correcting erroneous and fake citations never shifts to opposing counsel or the court, even if they are the first to notice the errors.”

“The duty to mitigate the harms caused by such errors remains with the signor,” Miller said. “The sooner such errors are properly corrected, either by withdrawing or amending and supplementing the offending pleadings, the less time is wasted by everyone involved, and fewer costs are incurred.”

Texas US District Judge Marina Garcia Marmolejo agreed, explaining that even more time is wasted determining how other judges have responded to fake AI-generated citations.

“At one of the busiest court dockets in the nation, there are scant resources to spare ferreting out erroneous AI citations in the first place, let alone surveying the burgeoning caselaw on this subject,” she said.

At least one Florida court was “shocked, shocked” to find that a lawyer was refusing to pay what the other party’s attorneys said they were owed after misusing AI. The lawyer in that case, James Martin Paul, asked to pay less than a quarter of the fees and costs owed, arguing that Charlotin’s database showed he might otherwise owe penalties that “would be the largest sanctions paid out for the use of AI generative case law to date.”

But caving to Paul’s arguments “would only benefit serial hallucinators,” the Florida court found. Ultimately, Paul was sanctioned more than $85,000 for what the court said was “far more egregious” conduct than other offenders in the database, chastising him for “repeated, abusive, bad-faith conduct that cannot be recognized as legitimate legal practice and must be deterred.”

Paul did not immediately respond to Ars’ request to comment.

Michael B. Slade, a US bankruptcy judge in Illinois, seems to be done weighing excuses, calling on all lawyers to stop taking AI shortcuts that are burdening courts.

“At this point, to be blunt, any lawyer unaware that using generative AI platforms to do legal research is playing with fire is living in a cloud,” Slade wrote.

This story was updated on November 11 to clarify a judge’s comments on misuse of public funds.

https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/11/lawyers-keep-giving-weak-sauce-excuses-for-fake-ai-citations-in-court-docs/

FBI orders domain registrar to reveal who runs mysterious Archive.is site

FBI wants detailed records

While copyright infringement would be a likely area of investigation for the FBI with Archive.today, the subpoena doesn’t provide specific information on the probe. The subpoena seeks the Archive.today customer or subscriber name, addresses, length of service, records of phone calls or texts, payment information, records of session times and duration of Internet connectivity, mobile device identification codes, IP addresses or other numbers used to identify the subscriber,

and the types of services provided.

In contrast with the nonprofit Internet Archive, the operator or operators of Archive.today have remained mysterious. It has used various domains (archive.ph, archive.is, etc.), and its registrant “Denis Petrov” may be an alias.

An FAQ that apparently hasn’t been updated in over a decade says that Archive.today, which was started in 2012, uses data centers in Europe and is “privately funded.” It also accepts donations. There are several indications that the founder is from Russia.

While the Internet Archive uses a system to automatically crawl the Internet, Archive.today relies on users to paste in URLs in order to archive their content. News articles published by major media outlets are often saved in full on the site, giving other users a way to read articles that are blocked by a paywall.

Archive.today doesn’t publicize a way for copyright owners to seek removal of content, whereas the Internet Archive has a policy for removing pages when it is made aware of content that infringes a copyright.

US publishers have been fighting web services designed to bypass paywalls. In July, the News/Media Alliance said it secured the takedown of paywall-bypass website 12ft.io. “Following the News/Media Alliance’s efforts, the webhost promptly locked 12ft.io on Monday, July 14th,” the group said. (Ars Technica owner Condé Nast is a member of the alliance.)

https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/11/fbi-subpoena-tries-to-unmask-mysterious-founder-of-archive-today/

Oddest ChatGPT leaks yet: Cringey chat logs found in Google analytics tool

OpenAI’s response leaves users with “lingering questions”

After ChatGPT prompts were found surfacing in Google’s search index in August, OpenAI clarified that users had clicked a box making those prompts public, which OpenAI defended as “sufficiently clear.” The AI firm later scrambled to remove the chats from Google’s SERPs after it became obvious that users felt misled into sharing private chats publicly.

Packer told Ars that a major difference between those leaks and the GSC leaks is that users harmed by the prior scandal, at least on some level, “had to actively share” their leaked chats. In the more recent case, “nobody clicked share” or had a reasonable way to prevent their chats from being exposed.

“Did OpenAI go so fast that they didn’t consider the privacy implications of this, or did they just not care?” Packer posited in his blog.

Perhaps most troubling to some users—whose identities are not linked in chats unless their prompts perhaps share identifying information—there does not seem to be any way to remove the leaked chats from GSC, unlike the prior scandal.

Packer and Manić are left with “lingering questions” about how far OpenAI’s fix will go to stop the issue.

Manić was hoping OpenAI might confirm if prompts entered on https://chatgpt.com that trigger Google Search were also affected. But OpenAI did not follow up on that question, or a broader question about how big the leak was. To Manić, a major concern was that OpenAI's scraping may be "contributing to 'crocodile mouth' in Google Search Console," a troubling trend SEO researchers have flagged that causes impressions to spike but clicks to dip.

OpenAI also declined to clarify Packer's biggest question. He's left wondering if the company's "fix" simply ended OpenAI's "routing of search queries, such that raw prompts are no longer being sent to Google Search, or are they no longer scraping Google Search at all for data?

"We still don't know if it's that one particular page that has this bug or whether this is really widespread," Packer told Ars. "In either case, it's serious and just sort of shows how little regard OpenAI has for moving carefully when it comes to privacy."

https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/11/oddest-chatgpt-leaks-yet-cringey-chat-logs-found-in-google-analytics-tool/