

Register the Critics!

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Joy Reid [cited](#) it as just another example of “right-wing fantasy,” and Newt Gingrich had, if anything, [worse things](#) to say about it.

What is it?

A proposed Florida law advanced by State Senator Jason Brodeur (R-Lake Mary).

[Senate Bill 1316](#) “would require bloggers to register with the state within five days of any post mentioning a state official, according to *Florida Politics*,” a *Newsweek* article [explains](#). “It would then require



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bloggers to file monthly reports listing posts that mention officials, as well as any compensation for those posts.”

The legislation, which has not advanced far — and probably won’t — has received mostly negative responses. Former Speaker of the House Gingrich’s is typical: “The idea that bloggers criticizing a politician should register with the government [is](#) insane. [I]t is an embarrassment that it is a Republican state legislator in Florida who introduced a bill to that effect. He should withdraw it immediately.”

Promoters of the law [defended](#) it mainly by saying that Gingrich’s criticism mischaracterized the law. Not all political bloggers would have to register, only those *paid* to write would be. *Only!*

“If a blogger posts to a blog about an elected state officer and receives, or will receive, compensation for that post, the blogger must register with the appropriate office. . . .”

Former FEC Commissioner Brad Smith [challenged](#) the notion itself: “Would you apply this to journalists? Citizen who write letters to their representatives? People who talk to their neighbors? Why not? No, you don’t have a right to know who is paying them. You have a right to ignore them if that matters to you.”

Since the world began, politicians have had a very difficult time ignoring their critics. Instead, like this Florida Senator, they want to shut them up. By force. By intimidation. By regulatory harassment.

The First Amendment says NO.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.