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David J. Groesbeck  
WSBA No. 24749  
David J. Groesbeck, P.S.  
1716 Sylvester St. SW  
Olympia, Washington 98501  
Tel.: 509-747-2800  
Fax: 509-747-2828  
Email: [david@groesbecklaw.com](mailto:david@groesbecklaw.com)

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT SEATTLE**

PARLER LLC,

Plaintiff,

v.

AMAZON WEB SERVICES, INC.,

Defendant

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR  
TEMPORARY RESTRAINING  
ORDER**

**NOTE ON MOTION CALENDAR  
January 10, 2021**

PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR  
TEMPORARY RESTRAINING  
ORDER - 1



David J. Groesbeck, P.S.  
Attorney and Counselor  
1716 Sylvester St. SW  
Olympia, Washington 98501  
(509) 747-2800

**INTRODUCTION**

1  
2 Plaintiff Parler, LLC moves the Court for a temporary restraining order  
3  
4 against Defendant Amazon Web Services, Inc (“AWS”). AWS is threatening to  
5 suspend all services to Parler tonight at 11:59 PM PST—and thus shut Parler down  
6 completely—with little more than a day’s notice. These actions not only breach the  
7 parties’ contract memorialized in the AWS Customer Agreement (the “Agreement”)  
8 but worse, threaten Parler with extinction right when the social media company  
9 was experiencing explosive growth. The elements are met for Rule 65 relief.  
10  
11

12 To prevent irreparable harm to the plaintiff, the Court should enter a  
13 temporary restraining order enjoining the defendant from suspending Parler’s  
14 account with AWS or terminating the Agreement. A proposed form of order is  
15 submitted to the Court in connection with this motion.  
16  
17

18 This motion is supported by the memorandum of points and authorities  
19 submitted herein; and by the Verified Complaint and exhibits thereto. For the  
20 reasons collectively presented to the Court, the motion should be granted.  
21  
22

**RELEVANT FACTS**

23  
24 1. Parler restates and incorporates by reference each of the allegations  
25 set forth in the Complaint as if fully set forth herein.  
26

27 2. Last Month, Defendant Amazon Web Services (“AWS”) and the  
28 popular social media platform **Twitter** signed a multi-year deal so that AWS could  
29



1 support the daily delivery of millions of tweets. AWS currently provides that same  
2 service to Parler, a conservative microblogging alternative and competitor to  
3 Twitter. (Compl. ¶ 1.)  
4

5 3. When Twitter announced two evenings ago that it was permanently  
6 banning President Trump from its platform, conservative users began to flee  
7 Twitter en masse for Parler. The exodus was so large that the next day, yesterday,  
8 Parler became the number one free app downloaded from Apple's App Store.  
9  
10 (Compl. ¶ 2.)  
11

12 4. Yet last evening, AWS announced that it would suspend Parler's  
13 account effective Sunday, January 10th, at 11:59 PM PST. And it stated the reason  
14 for the suspension was that AWS was not confident Parler could properly police its  
15 platform regarding content that encourages or incites violence against others.  
16  
17 However, Friday night one of the top trending tweets on Twitter was "Hang Mike  
18 Pence." But AWS has no plans nor has it made any threats to suspend Twitter's  
19 account. (Compl. ¶ 3.)  
20  
21

22 5. AWS's decision to suspend Parler's account is apparently motivated by  
23 political animus. It is also apparently designed to reduce competition in the  
24 microblogging services market to the benefit of Twitter. (Compl. ¶ 4.)  
25  
26

27 6. Thus, AWS is violating Section 1 of the Sherman Antitrust Act in  
28 combination with Twitter. AWS is also breaching its contract with Parler, which  
29



1 requires AWS to provide Parler with a thirty-day notice before terminating service,  
2 rather than the less than thirty-hour notice AWS actually provided. Finally, AWS  
3 is committing intentional interference with prospective economic advantage given  
4 the millions of users expected to sign up in the near future. (Compl. ¶ 5.)

5  
6 7. This emergency motion seeks a Temporary Restraining Order against  
7 Defendant Amazon Web Services to prevent it from shutting down Parler’s account  
8 at the end of today. Doing so is the equivalent of pulling the plug on a hospital  
9 patient on life support. It will kill Parler’s business—at the very time it is set to  
10 skyrocket. (Compl. ¶ 6.)

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14 **MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT**

15 To succeed on a motion for a temporary restraining order, the moving party  
16 must show: (1) a likelihood of success on the merits; (2) a likelihood of irreparable  
17 harm to the moving party in the absence of preliminary relief; (3) that a balance of  
18 equities tips in the favor of the moving party; and (4) that an injunction is in the  
19 public interest. *See Winter v. Natural Res. Def. Council, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 7, 20 (2008).

20  
21 The Ninth Circuit employs a “sliding scale” approach, according to which these  
22 elements are balanced, “so that a stronger showing of one element may offset a  
23 weaker showing of another.” *Alliance for the Wild Rockies v. Cottrell*, 632 F.3d 1127,  
24 1131 (9th Cir. 2011). Under the *Winter* test, a party merits relief when it raises  
25 serious questions going to the merits of its case and a balance of hardships that tips  
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30 PLAINTIFF’S MOTION FOR  
31 TEMPORARY RESTRAINING  
32 ORDER - 4



David J. Groesbeck, P.S.  
Attorney and Counselor  
1716 Sylvester St. SW  
Olympia, Washington 98501  
(509) 747-2800

1 sharply in its favor, provided it also makes a showing for the irreparable harm and  
2 public interest factors. *Alliance for the Wild Rockies v. Cottrell*, 632 F.3d 1127, 1131.  
3  
4 (9th Cir. 2011).

5 The plaintiff meets all four elements.

6  
7 **1. The plaintiff will suffer immediate, irreparable harm unless**  
8 **the order issues.**

9  
10 To qualify for *ex parte* relief, Rule 65 requires a showing that “immediate and  
11 irreparable injury, loss, or damage will result to the movant before the adverse  
12 party can be heard in opposition.” Fed.R.Civ.P. 65(b)(1)(A). AWS has clearly  
13 indicated willingness to inflict such harm. First, and most obviously, because AWS  
14 has given Parler only a single day’s notice of its intent to suspend Parler’s account,  
15 the threatened harm to Parler could hardly be more immediate.  
16  
17

18 The threatened suspension will have the effect of rendering Parler, a social  
19 media service, entirely unable to function online, either on a web browser or an app  
20 on a mobile phone. (Compl. ¶¶ 13, 20-21, 23.) That alone would inflict “[i]rreparable  
21 harm ... for which there is no adequate legal remedy.” *Arizona Dream Act Coalition*  
22 *v. Brewer*, 757 F. 3d 1053, 1068 (9th Cir. 2014). First, by booting Parler from its  
23 servers, AWS will entirely frustrate Parler’s mission to provide a privacy-focused  
24 forum for free speech. (Compl. ¶¶ 10, 25.) Parler’s surging popularity in a crowded  
25 field of social and mainstream media shows that the company is satisfying an  
26  
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1 otherwise unmet demand for such a forum. (Compl. ¶¶ 2, 10, 25.) By shutting Parler  
2 down, AWS eviscerates Parler's whole corporate purpose and functionality, leaving  
3 Parler without a remedy.  
4

5 Second, although Parler occupies a unique space in the market, it still  
6 competes with other microblogging services like Twitter to facilitate real-time  
7 discussions of breaking news and other contemporaneous events. (Compl. ¶¶ 1-2,  
8 14, 17-19, 22, 24.) Losing all of its online capabilities will leave Parler entirely  
9 unable to compete with the offerings of those direct competitors, eliminating its  
10 relevance as a forum for discussion and driving millions of users, out of necessity,  
11 to those other platforms. (Compl. ¶ 24.) Because Parler's business model is not  
12 based on subscription fees, there is no adequate monetary remedy to measure and  
13 compensate for Parler's imminent loss of users and user loyalty. (Compl. ¶ 14.)  
14

15 There is nothing speculative about the likelihood of harms Parler will suffer absent  
16 preliminary relief. AWS has been quite forthright in publicizing when Parler will  
17 lose its account and, with it, Parler's ability to function at all. (Compl. ¶¶ 13, 21-  
18 22.) To lose all functionality, even temporarily, will inflict irreparable damage on  
19 Parler's free-speech mission, reputation, and competitive position in a fluctuating  
20 market. Given Parler's current dynamic growth, it would be too difficult to calculate  
21 money damages for these harms. Hence, the absence of an adequate legal remedy  
22 necessitates preventative, injunctive relief.  
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30 PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR  
31 TEMPORARY RESTRAINING  
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David J. Groesbeck, P.S.  
Attorney and Counselor  
1716 Sylvester St. SW  
Olympia, Washington 98501  
(509) 747-2800

1           **2. The threatened injury to the plaintiff far outweighs whatever**  
2           **damage, if any, the proposed order or injunction may cause the**  
3           **defendant.**

4           The defendant will suffer little to no inconvenience by being ordered to  
5           preserve the status quo. Indeed, when, after several rounds of productive  
6           discussions, AWS abruptly notified Parler that it would suspend the account, it  
7           made no mention of any harm that AWS itself might suffer by continuing to comply  
8           with its contractual obligations. By contrast, AWS's intended actions signify an  
9           existential threat to Parler. Weighing the inconvenience to AWS by continuing to  
10          host Parler against Parler's imminent loss of all ability to function as an online  
11          service and consequent damage to its entire business and mission, the balance of  
12          hardships tips sharply in favor of Parler. This element strongly favors the plaintiff.

13           **3. The order would serve the public interest.**

14           The public interest is served when service providers, whether they be online  
15          computing platforms or social media sites, fulfill their contractual obligations. The  
16          public interest in fair and robust market competition is also served when companies  
17          are prevented from construing the same contractual obligations inconsistently  
18          when applied to different customers who are direct market competitors.

19          On the other hand, there is no public interest in allowing large, quasi-monopolies  
20          to coordinate in stifling smaller, disruptive innovators or to tortiously interfere with  
21          



1 another's contracts and business expectations. The public interest element favors  
2 injunctive relief.

3  
4 **4. There is a substantial likelihood that the plaintiffs will succeed**  
5 **on the merits of the underlying claims, or the case presents**  
6 **serious issues on the merits.**

7 The plaintiffs have sued the defendants on three causes of action that form  
8 the basis for this injunctive relief motion: Sherman Act violation, breach of contract,  
9 and tortious interference with a contract or business expectancy. The plaintiffs are  
10 likely to succeed on each of these claims, or they present serious issues on the  
11 merits.  
12

13  
14 **a. *Sherman Act Violation.***  
15

16 To prove a violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, Parler must show: (1)  
17 the existence of a conspiracy, (2) intention on the part of the co-conspirators to  
18 restrain trade, and (3) actual injury to competition.” *Coalition For ICANN*  
19 *Transparency, Inc. v. VeriSign, Inc.*, 611 F.3d 495, 501-02 (9th Cir. 2010). As stated  
20 in the Verified Complaint, AWS provides online hosting services to both Parler and  
21 Twitter, Parler's direct competitor. The complaint further shows that, by shutting  
22 down Parler for content comparable to that found in abundance on Twitter, AWS  
23 suppresses a smaller but surging microblogging company to the direct benefit of a  
24 larger one—a major customer of AWS—thereby reducing competition and severely  
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1 restraining commerce on pretextual grounds. Parler therefore has shown a  
2 substantial likelihood of succeeding on this claim, and certainly presents serious  
3 issues on the merits.  
4

5 **b. Breach of Contract**

6 Under Washington law, a claimant establishes breach of contract where he  
7 shows that “the contract imposes a duty, the duty is breached, and the breach  
8 proximately causes damage to the claimant.” *See Northwest Independent Forest*  
9 *Mfrs. v. Dept. of Labor and Industries*, 78 Wn. App. 707, 712, 899 P.2d 6 (1995).  
10 Plaintiff meets all of these elements.  
11  
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13  
14 As stated in the Verified Complaint, the Agreement allows either party to  
15 terminate the Agreement “for cause if the other party is in material breach of this  
16 Agreement and the material breach remains uncured for a period of 30 days from  
17 receipts of notice by the other party.” (Compl., Ex. B.) AWS brought its concerns to  
18 Parler on January 8, 2021 and, after approving Parler’s curing of those concerns,  
19 nevertheless notified Parler on January 9 that it would suspend Parler’s account on  
20 January 10. Although AWS used the term “suspension,” its language about  
21 migrating Parler’s data to other servers revealed AWS’s intent to permanently  
22 terminate Parler’s account without the requisite 30-day curing period. (Compl. ¶¶  
23 40-43.) Because AWS’s threatened breach will entirely disrupt Parler’s ability to  
24 function as an online microblogging service, and because even a temporary  
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1 disruption will hurt Parler’s mission, reputation, and competitive position in the  
2 microblogging market, Parler has shown both serious issues on the merits of this  
3 claim and a substantial likelihood of success.  
4

5 ***c. Tortious Interference with a Contract or Business***  
6 ***Expectancy***

7 Finally, under Washington law Parler can establish tortious interference by  
8 showing “(1) the existence of a valid contractual relationship or business  
9 expectancy; (2) the defendant’s knowledge of that relationship; (3) an intentional  
10 interference inducing or causing a breach or termination of the relationship or  
11 interference inducing or causing a breach or termination of the relationship or  
12 expectancy; (4) the defendant's interference for an improper purpose or by improper  
13 means; and (5) resulting damage.” *Koch v. Mutual of Enumclaw Ins. Co.*, 108 Wn.  
14 App. 500, 506, 31 P.3d 698 (2001). The Verified Complaint shows that AWS is well  
15 aware that: Parler has millions of users under contract, expects to add millions  
16 more, and was about to go to the market to raise more capital. (Compl. ¶¶ 48-49.)  
17 Thus, when coupled with AWS’s anti-competitive motives, pretextual reasons, and  
18 contractual breaches, Parler has demonstrated a substantial likelihood of success  
19 and serious issues on the merits.  
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27 ///



CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the plaintiff requests that the Court grant it a temporary restraining order against the defendant as set forth herein. A proposed form of Temporary Restraining Order is submitted herewith.

Dated: January 10, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

/s David J. Groesbeck  
WSBA No. 24749  
DAVID J. GROESBECK, P.S.  
1716 Sylvester St. SW  
Olympia, WA 98501  
(509) 747-2800  
[david@groesbecklaw.com](mailto:david@groesbecklaw.com)

621 W. Mallon Ave., Suite 507  
Spokane, WA 99201

*Counsel for Plaintiff*

