

November 16, 2020

Mark Zuckerberg
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
Facebook, Inc.
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Email: mz@fb.com
Cc: Sheryl Sandberg
Email: sheryl@fb.com

Re: Facebook's Spanish Language Disinformation Gap

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg:

We write to express our deep disappointment in your company's inaction and enablement of the targeting, manipulation, and disenfranchisement of Latinx users on your platform. Despite repeated efforts by the undersigned groups to alert you of this issue throughout this election cycle, Facebook did very little to curb Spanish-language disinformation campaigns attempting to influence and divide Latinx voters. As disinformation campaigns continue to proliferate post-election, we urgently implore you to address this ongoing issue.

While Spanish language disinformation is not unique to Facebook, the issue is particularly acute given that—per your own data¹—over seventy percent of Latinx people who use social media prefer Facebook over other platforms. The challenges of tackling disinformation targeting Latinx are compounded by Facebook's neglectful, incompetent oversight to moderate content in Spanish. For example, Spanish language content featuring a call to arms prior to the Kenosha shooting remains up to this day, despite the fact that English language content of the exact same or similar nature has been removed. Leading up to the election, journalists and activists alike alerted your company and the public to massive disinformation campaigns targeting Latinxs.² In reaction to these alerts,

¹ Digital Diversity: A Closer Look at US Hispanics, Facebook IQ (Dec. 4, 2014), https://www.facebook.com/business/news/insights/digital-diversity-a-closer-look-at-us-hispanics?ref=search_new_0#.

² April Glaser, *Latino voters targeted by abortion misinformation campaigns*, NBC News (Oct. 29, 2020), <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/latino-voters-targeted-abortion-misinformation-campaigns-n12>

Facebook did very little. Due to Facebook's refusal to take this issue seriously, organizations like United We Dream took it upon themselves to combat disinformation in Spanish through mass amplification and dissemination of Spanish-language content featuring accurate information.³ Additionally, U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro (TX-20), Chairman of the Hispanic Caucus and U.S. Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (FL-26), member of the Judiciary Committee recently wrote to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) requesting an investigation into the origins of disinformation campaigns and deceptive claims targeting Latino voters in South Florida.⁴

From what Facebook is willing to share with our groups or publicly, it is apparent that decision makers at Facebook are systematically overlooking the U.S. Latinx community in the enforcement of its policy changes aimed at protecting Facebook's users from disinformation. This level of incompetence is insensitive and outdated. The Latinx community is not a monolith, and any enforcement to protect Latinxs must be rooted in a meaningful understanding of this.

Moreover, it is recklessly inappropriate for Facebook to expect non-profit organizations, including many of whom are undersigned here, to spend their limited resources to find, flag, and analyze Spanish-language content clearly in violation of the platform's policies. Not only does this deplete valuable resources that should be dedicated to directly advocating for and providing services to our community, it is also an exhausting exercise in microaggression pain points of our position and power in the systemically inequitable U.S. tech industry.

[45136](#); Allana Akhtar, *'Real Catholics can't be Democrats': Right-wing disinformation campaigns are targeting Latinos in Spanish Facebook and WhatsApp groups*, Business Insider (Oct. 13, 2020) <https://www.businessinsider.com/facebook-whatsapp-disinformation-campaigns-target-latinos-2020-10>; Rebecca Klar, *Disinformation, QAnon efforts targeting Latino voters ramp up ahead of presidential election*, The Hill (Sept. 25, 2020), <https://thehill.com/policy/technology/518118-disinformation-qanon-efforts-targeting-latinos-voters-ramp-up-ahead-of>.

³ Immigrant Youth Are Fighting Back Against Disinformation and "Reclaiming The Web", United We Dream, Press Release (Oct. 29, 2020), <https://unitedwedreamaction.org/2020/10/immigrant-youth-are-fighting-back-against-disinformation-and-reclaiming-the-web/>.

⁴ After Reports Of Disinformation Targeting Florida Latino Voters, Mucarsel-Powell And Castro Send Letter Requesting FBI Investigation, U.S. Representative Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, Press Release (Sept. 23, 2020) <https://mucarsel-powell.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=734>

It is past time for Facebook to take meaningful action to address the real-life harms that result from its inaction to protect Latinx and Spanish speaking communities targeted by ongoing hate and disinformation.

Sincerely,

Center for American Progress

Color of Change

Free Press

Global Project Against Hate and Extremism

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

Hispanics in Philanthropy

Labor Council for Latin American Advancement

LatinoJustice PRLDEF

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

MediaJustice

Mi Familia Vota

National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures

National Hispanic Media Coalition

National Latinx Psychological Association

The TransLatin@ Coalition

UltraViolet

UnidosUS

United States Hispanic Leadership Institute, Inc.

Voto Latino