



September 22, 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 complacency in organized hate is killing our communities.

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg:

I write to you today to reiterate the urgency of content reform and enforcement against hate at Facebook. My name is Brenda Victoria Castillo and I serve as President and CEO of the National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC). NHMC is a 35 year-old civil rights organization, founded specifically to combat hate, discrimination and racism against the Latinx community. NHMC is a founding member in the [Stop Hate for Profit \(SHFP\)](#) campaign in addition to being a founding member of the [Change the Terms](#) coalition, both of which I am sure you are familiar with.

NHMC works on a number of issues that intersect with Facebook's mission and real-world impact, particularly in light of the surge of White Supremacy and organized hate on the platform. As the first female President of NHMC, I understand the gravity and difficulty that can accompany leadership. You are a well known creator, with the history books sure to recognize your pioneering in the world of social media and tech. With this responsibility, I urge you to be a leader who actively works to protect our community from discrimination, harassment, and the inevitable violence that flourishes on Facebook.

Earlier this month, two young people were shot while exercising their constitutional right to protest against the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Their assailant crossed state lines, armed with a deadly assault rifle, in response to a "call to arms" [posted in an event titled](#) "Armed Citizens to Protect our Lives and Property" created by a self-described militia

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group, the Kenosha Guard. This is another tragic event in a string of organized hate on Facebook that manifests to real life harm. Not only did this content violate Facebook's existing policies, it was reviewed by at least four different human moderators and deemed acceptable content for the platform. Facebook's incompetency is costing us our lives.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time families are grieving their lost loved ones due to hate that sparked online and was willfully allowed to flourish under Facebook's control. In August of 2019, a white supremacist drove twelve hours across the state of Texas to murder 23 people in the name of "stopping the Hispanic invasion." Where did he get this radicalized rhetoric that drove him to murder? Facebook allowed the Trump Administration to run more than 2,000 ads calling immigrants coming through the U.S. Southern border, "an invasion".

Similarly, as recently emphasized to Facebook in a letter from over a hundred [women Members of Congress](#) in August 2020, women, especially those who are running or hold elected office, face more hate and harassment than their male counterparts. According to this letter and [recent research done by She Persisted](#), Facebook has still not taken responsibility or initiative for the influx of hate against women on its platform, including eliminating malicious hate speech that promotes violence against women. It is not only disheartening that you have not given this important topic the air time it more than deserves, it is disrespectful to continue to allow the harassment of women on your platform unchecked.

NHMC has communicated with Facebook for many years on hate speech and other critical digital rights topics in Washington, D.C. Despite seeing the Facebook D.C. office nearly double in size, our team's concerns have largely been dismissed or not taken seriously, or have been communicated to well-intentioned employees without decision-making power. Further, when NHMC has spoken out against Facebook's practices on Facebook and Instagram tagging the company or your account, Mr. Zuckerberg, the tag is automatically removed. In addition, any content criticizing Facebook or its leaders conveniently and consistently performs poorly, despite the ongoing popularity of NHMC's other activist and advocacy content. As a leader and as an American, I expect that you understand the necessity for open opportunity for criticism in this democracy. However, this practice, which does not seem to be unique to NHMC, silences your opposition in an undemocratic and discriminatory manner.

Today, I am calling on you, as the founder and current leader of Facebook, to make the following meaningful changes immediately:

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- Conduct and publicly release a full investigation into your failure to enforce the recent policy on “Dangerous Individuals and Organizations” and your policy against calls to arms.
- Clarify publically whether the Kenosha shooter had received the page and/or event information algorithmically prompted to him, or whether he was invited to the event by a person.
- Build tools to systematically increase the proactive enforcement of your rules, including detection of event pages that promote violence, and stop relying on the victims of hate speech and violent speech to flag violations. Prioritize rapid review of event pages flagged by users in this category, especially those belonging to known white supremacist and militia groups.
- Take accountability for your design failure, rather than trying to pass the blame onto underpaid contractors who are doing a difficult job with insufficient support.
- Provide a public description of the training content moderators receive to accurately identify and understand the inner workings of militias.
- Ensure all content moderators receive adequate training on militia content and patterns, including the violent threat the groups pose to the general public, or at least ensure proper routing of complaints.
- Monitor spikes in feedback reports for events, and trigger an investigation immediately, as suggested by a Facebook employee, “given this has proved to be a good signal for imminent harm.”
- Conduct and publicly release a broad investigation into the ways in which the design of your products—including groups and event pages—are being used to incite, glorify, organize, and perpetrate violence by White supremacists, militias, and violent misogynist groups.
- Adopt the “Recommended Internet Company Corporate Policies and Terms of Service to Reduce Hateful Activities” authored by the Change the Terms coalition, to include a ban on hateful activities, better enforcement of your existing policies, and more accountability for injecting human and civil rights into content moderation decisions at the C-suite and Board of Directors level.
- Unequivocally ban all hate groups, white supremacist militia groups, violent misogynist groups, and event pages that encourage people to bring weapons to events.
- Stop any practice of demoting or suppressing content that criticizes or is not favorable to Facebook.



To make matters worse, Facebook is openly subsidizing hate and bias in its India office. Several former Facebook employees have recently spoken out exposing multiple instances of anti-Muslim hate speech and bias, including genocidal hate speech, by Ankhi Das, the head of Public Policy at Facebook, India. This, again, is a repeat instance of Facebook's practice of relaxing content rules and lackluster enforcement against genocidal speech for certain actors. Since 2013, [Facebook has played a dangerous role](#) in the violent incitement of mobs and riots, leading to property damage and loss of precious lives.

Finally, as an organization that represents the digital rights and representation of Latinx people in the United States, it is unacceptable to see Facebook's minimal efforts to diversify its workforce with Latinx. And what about your C-Suite positions? Is there Latinx representation in these roles? I know we are not represented on your Facebook's Board of Directors. Facebook is based out of California—a state with a nearly 40% Latinx population, the highest in the U.S.—yet, only [6.3 percent of Facebook employees](#) are Latinx. This, despite the fact that, [according to Facebook's own data](#), over seventy percent of Latinx who use social media prefer Facebook over other platforms. To truly protect the privacy, civil rights, and dignity of the Latinx community, it is paramount that Facebook take meaningful action to ensure that those who are designing and making life-altering decisions behind the scenes mirror the audiences who are most served and impacted by Facebook's products.

In sum, Facebook is discriminating against the Latinx community and putting human lives at risk. It is time for you to take real action. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brenda Victoria Castillo'.

Brenda Victoria Castillo
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National Hispanic Media Coalition
bcastillo@nhmc.org

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