

February 12, 2021

Public Comments of the National Hispanic Media Coalition

Re: Facebook's Suspension of Donald J. Trump

2021-001-FB-FBR

The National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC) is a 35 year old nonprofit 501(c)(3) civil rights organization that was founded to eliminate hate, discrimination, and racism towards the Latinx community. Today, we write to the Facebook Oversight Board to uphold its rightful suspension of Donald J. Trump's Facebook account. Over the last several years, former president Trump has attacked, harassed, and incited violence against the Latinx community on Facebook and other social media platforms. NHMC has dedicated much of its limited resources as a nonprofit to combat the hate, white supremacy, disinformation, and conspiracy theories that have threatened and taken the lives of Latinx and other marginalized communities across the U.S. as a result of Facebook's tolerance of Trump. We formally implore the Oversight Board to permanently ban Donald J. Trump from Facebook and its subsidiaries.

As we have expressed time and again: online hate leads to hate and violence in real life, and must be taken seriously by this Board and Facebook. In the years since Trump's rise in popularity on Facebook hate crimes have severely increased in the U.S. In 2019, hate crimes reached their [highest levels in a decade](#), with hate crimes targeting Latinx increasing for the fourth straight year. Trump's words, both online and in person, can be [directly connected](#) to rises in hate over the last several years.

The devastating effects of Trump's hate targeting the Latinx community continues to be deeply felt in El Paso, Texas. [On August 3, 2019](#), an anti-immigrant white nationalist, radicalized by Trump's extreme rhetoric, drove nearly 600 miles across the state of Texas to open fire at a local Walmart, killing 23 people and injuring another 22. Before committing the largest mass murder targeting Latinx ever, the El Paso murderer posted a [manifesto online](#), calling for an end to a 'Latino invasion'. Where did this hate and rhetoric come from? Perhaps from one of the [2,200 ads the Trump Administration](#) ran on Facebook referring to Latinx immigrants as "an invasion." It is beyond irresponsible that this was one of many examples that demonstrate a clear nexus between Trump's Facebook presence and violent, organized, and radicalized extremists.

Though NHMC firmly believes the Oversight Board has more than enough evidence to permanently ban Donald J. Trump based on his actions on Facebook prior to the January 6, 2021 insurrection, his [live-streamed](#) unambiguous rallying of the mob which moments later stormed the Capitol should be the final stroke to Trump's long rap sheet of content that violates

Facebook's content policies. NHMC urges the Oversight Board to take a holistic approach to this case, as the context is crucial to understanding the impact your final decision will have on our democracy. As the second impeachment trial of former president Trump unfolds, the Board should take into consideration relevant evidence which arises pertaining to Trump's role in the insurrection.

Facebook's tolerance of Trump up until the attempted coup at the U.S. capitol came at the cost of lives and safety. This case before the Oversight Board is a last-ditch chance for Facebook to correct its disconcerting history of inaction, and take a stand against hate and violence.

Facebook has enabled the spread of white supremacy and dangerous conspiracy theories under the guise of responsible content moderation for far too long. It is time for Facebook to cease the use of their platforms as vehicles for organized hate and call-to-arms events. As we have learned time and again, temporary suspensions and downranking of repeat offenders, like former president Trump, are not sufficient nor appropriate given the gravity of the issue at hand. It is more than time for Facebook to permanently revoke Donald J. Trump's account, and do their part to defend the democracy of the United States of America.

Sincerely,



Brenda Victoria Castillo
President & CEO
National Hispanic Media Coalition