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May 5, 2021

Mark Zuckerberg  
Chief Executive Officer  
Facebook  
1 Hacker Way  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mark Zuckerberg,

We were surprised to read in the Facebook Oversight Board’s decision on the Donald Trump matter that:

“The Board sought clarification from Facebook about the extent to which the platform’s design decisions, including algorithms, policies, procedures and technical features, amplified Mr. Trump’s posts after the election and whether Facebook had conducted any internal analysis of whether such design decisions may have contributed to the events of January 6. Facebook declined to answer these questions.”

We are writing now to urge you immediately to provide those clarifications publicly and to make public any internal analysis about how Facebook’s design features contributed to the events of January 6. In light of what occurred on January 6, the idea that Facebook would keep such analysis secret is shocking. Equally shocking is the possibility that Facebook has not conducted any such analysis.

More generally, we call on you to make public any internal analyses that explain how Facebook’s design features amplified the damage that Donald Trump inflicted through his Facebook posts over the last many years, including but not limited to the propagation of hate speech, dissemination of lies about the 2020 election and spread of Covid-19 disinformation. If there are no such analyses, we urge you to conduct them immediately and make the results public.

Facebook knows better than any outside person or entity what questions should be asked, but questions that should be answered include:

- How did the Facebook algorithm treat extremist content from Trump that violated Facebook’s own community standards? In what ways did it amplify it?
- How did the algorithm treat forwards of Trumps standards-violating posts and derivative content? In what ways did it amplify it?

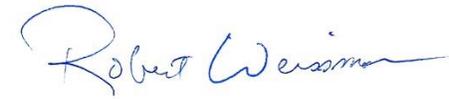
- How did users receive and view Trump's standards-violating posts? Did any Facebook features or policies elevate those posts?
- In what ways, if any, did advertisements or paid promotions amplify standards-violating posts?
- How did participants in the January 6 insurrection use Facebook and in what ways, if any, did Facebook features or policies facilitate that usage?

We recognize that content moderation decisions are hard and involve difficult assessments of relative harm against values of freedom of expression and the free flow of information. But decisions related to Facebook design features are categorically different. In these situations, Facebook is not a passive platform forced to make hard calls due to the actions of third parties. Rather, Facebook design features involve affirmative decisions by the company that result in the boosting of certain messages over others. Facebook has a much greater responsibility to manage those decisions to avoid inflicting harm. And the unprecedented reach of Facebook means its design decisions have unprecedented impact on society.

After January 6 -- and in light of the ongoing harm done to public health due to the lies that Donald Trump spread on Facebook related to Covid-19 -- Facebook has a duty to analyze and share with the public how its design feature, decisions and policies contributed to the harm that Donald Trump inflicted through his social media posts.

Thank you and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Weissman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert Weissman,  
President