

Senator Ted Kaufman
Mr. Yohannes Abraham
Biden Transition Team

Dear Senator Kaufman and Mr. Abraham,

America is facing a crisis of truth. Facebook is increasingly serving as an information gatekeeper for its billions of users around the world, giving it enormous power with little oversight. As a company built to generate growth and profits instead of serve the public good, our democracy is now paying the price.

From spreading dangerous COVID-19¹ health conspiracies and supercharging election misinformation², to promoting racist content³ about Black Lives Matter protests, enabling white supremacist movements⁴, and serving as tools of authoritarian regimes⁵, Facebook is proving itself unwilling to protect public health, stop the spread of racism and hate, and prevent violence. Despite the rise in intolerance for disinformation, numerous data related scandals, and elevated surveillance, Facebook continues to reign simply due to its lack of competition⁶.

As Vice President Biden has already made clear⁷, what Facebook is doing is “simply wrong” and oversight and accountability are long overdue. As stakeholders, public interest advocates and experts on online misinformation, we strongly agree.

If you hold a position of influence at the company that has abdicated its responsibilities to ensure a functioning democracy and instead is actively undermining it, then you shouldn’t be serving in government. **Therefore, we urge you to commit now that no person who is a current senior executive, VP, product manager, board member, or c-suite executive at Facebook or in a job relating to policy or regulatory matters at Facebook will be nominated or appointed to serve any function in a Biden Transition or Administration. Additionally, no person who is a registered lobbyist for Facebook should be nominated or appointed to serve any function in a Biden Transition or Administration.** It’s simple: Individuals who have worked at the highest levels of a company—or those whose works involve influencing public policy and defending Facebook’s continued misconduct—that spreads hate and undermines our democracy should not be given positions in an administration committed to fighting hate and restoring our democracy.

¹ [Most Covid-19 Misinformation Originate on Facebook](#)

² [Biden Campaign Demands that Facebook Crack Down on Trump, Disinformation Ahead of Presidential Election](#)

³ [Opinion: Fascists Don't Need Op-Ed Pages, They Already have Facebook and Google](#)

⁴ [White Supremacist Groups Are Thriving on Facebook](#)

⁵ [A Genocide Incited on Facebook, with Posts from Myanmar's Military](#)

⁶ [Addressing Facebook and Google's Harms Through a Regulated Competition Approach](#)

⁷ [New York Times Editorial Board: Joe Biden](#)

We wish to acknowledge that barring Facebook senior executives, policy/regulatory staff, and lobbyists from a Biden transition and administration is not in itself *sufficient* to the challenges raised by monopolistic technology platforms that threaten our democracy, health, and civic life. A Biden administration must undertake a comprehensive strategy that implicates both legislation and executive action. But, barring the Facebook officials from service in the transition and the administration is *necessary*.

When Senator Kaufman introduced the Safe Banking Act in 2010 to cap the size of banks, it was because he recognized “too big to fail is too big to exist.”⁸ Four banks should not hold half of the nation’s economic output, own half of all mortgages, and issue a majority of credit cards. Senator Kaufman took a stand against these private companies holding monopolies over banking power. At the time, it was acknowledged that the size of these banking institutions made it more difficult to prosecute them. Zuckerberg himself was unable to identify any real competitors to Facebook while he stood before Congress saying Facebook should remain unregulated.⁹ Facebook has made it clear they have little regard for their user’s privacy or information consumption, and that they will sacrifice truth and public safety for clicks.

We know the Biden transition would not consider people who work for or lobby on behalf of Tobacco companies or the National Rifle Association for a role in the transition or the administration. That’s because the overall impact of those organizations on American health, safety, and civic vitality is in a word: toxic. Similarly, Facebook’s willful and repeated practices undermine our democracy and civic life, while profiting off of the facilitation of racist violence is toxic.

When Vice President Biden announced his candidacy, he said he was running for president to “restore the soul of this nation.” Making good on that promise should start with appointing people committed to that idea, not those who have contributed to the crisis we face today.

Sincerely,

American Economic Liberties Project
Center for Popular Democracy
Communications Workers of America
Defend American Democracy
Demand Progress
Democracy For America
Indivisible
Open Markets Institute
People’s Parity Project
Guns Down America

⁸ [The Weak Spot in the Financial Reform Bill](#)

⁹ [Transcript of Mark Zuckerberg’s Senate Hearing](#)