

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1803

April 24, 2018

Mr. Mark Zuckerberg
Founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Facebook
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, California 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg,

I want to thank you for your recent participation in multiple Congressional hearings in Washington D.C. Having an open line of communication between a large and highly influential organization such as yours and the United States (U.S.) Congress is an important tool to ensure that the liberties afforded to us by the U.S. Constitution are protected.

While the facts brought to light during these hearings focused mainly on personal privacy and foreign influence were encouraging, I still have many concerns over the silencing of particular viewpoints on your site, as well as the continued dissemination of clearly fake and politically-motivated information. No matter what your political leanings may be, I believe it is important to treat the expression of all opinions equally, as demanded by the First Amendment.^[1] The silencing of voices of particular points of view can cause negative effects on public discourse, sometimes with dire consequences. However, a line should be drawn when political propaganda not grounded in reality, much less fact of any kind finds its way onto your site. While I am aware that change cannot happen overnight, I am concerned that the vetting measures currently employed by your company are not working quickly enough to remove fake information.

In fact, only one week after you testified to Congress my office began receiving frantic calls and digital messages that members of Congress had recently voted to make drastic cuts to Social Security. For background, I represent many seniors who rely upon Social Security as a means of income after their retirement. This is a righteous program that has been earned through a lifetime of work. Like many of my colleagues, I support Social Security and efforts to strengthen the program for future generations.

That said, I am deeply troubled by a recent Facebook post spreading false information about the Social Security program. A liberal group called "Social Security Works" has used your site to spread false claims that the U.S. House of Representatives voted to "steal Social

^[1] <https://constitution.findlaw.com/amendment1.html>

Security's \$2.9 trillion surplus," while voting on H.J. Res. 2. This is objectively false, and at best a serious misrepresentation of the truth.^[2] Further, it is clear that the distribution of this fictitious information is quickly exacerbated through the utilization of fake Facebook profile accounts.

H.J. Res. 2 calls for a Balanced Budget Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.^[3] Nowhere in the bill is Social Security mentioned, and further no changes whatsoever are made to the Social Security program. My staff reported this content to Facebook as false information within 24 hours of its original posting on April 13, 2018. However, the post remains publicly available more than 2 weeks later, having garnered over 190,000 shares. This content displays a clear and intentional bias against Republicans and is being used to mislead seniors. However, my staff was notified that the post does not violate Facebook's standards. This response is deeply troubling given Facebook's public comments on preventing the spread of fake news on its platform.

In closing, I would like to state that I am completely against regulating your business. I believe that it is your responsibility as a business owner and citizen of this great nation to run your site in a way that promotes open, fair, and civil discourse, while at the same time deterring bad actors from disrupting the free flow of factual information.

Again, I thank you for your recent visit to Capitol Hill and your engagement with Congress on issues that are important to the nation.

Sincerely,



Clay Higgins
United States Congressman

^[2] <https://www.facebook.com/socialsecurityworks/posts/1885013338189183>

^[3] <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-joint-resolution/2>