

An Ex-Facebooker Devastatingly Piled Into Mark Zuckerberg's Stance Allowing Politicians to Lie in Ads

Facebook's former head of global elections integrity voiced her concerns in a 'Washington Post' op-ed.

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A former Facebook employee has written a scathing op-ed article in *The Washington Post* condemning the company's approach to political advertising.

Yaël Eisenstat, a former CIA officer and White House adviser, joined Facebook in June 2018 as its head of global elections integrity operations.

She remained at the company for only six months.

Eisenstat said Facebook's business model was fundamentally biased against caring about election integrity.

"The real problem is that Facebook profits partly by amplifying lies and selling dangerous targeting tools that allow political operatives to engage in a new level of information warfare," she wrote.

She said that some of her colleagues during her time at Facebook were eager to address complex problems like misinformation in political advertising but that she

encountered pushback at higher levels and was accused of “creating confusion.”

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She agreed with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg that the company should not outright ban political advertising, as Twitter has done, but argued it should suspend political ads until it figured out a way to be more transparent about targeting.

Eisenstat’s comments intensify pressure on Facebook, which has been on the defensive since announcing that it would allow politicians to lie in political ads.

The stance that has triggered blowback from politicians and Facebook’s own employees. And multiple political candidates have run stunts meant to highlight how easy it is to slip lies into the public discourse through Facebook’s ads. Twitter’s CEO, Jack Dorsey, entered the fray by announcing his firm would drop all political ads.

Zuckerberg and the company’s chief operating officer, Sheryl Sandberg, have defended the policy on free-speech grounds, saying private firms shouldn’t censor politicians.

Eisenstat is not alone in calling for a temporary suspension of political ads. A group of UK-based nonprofits and academics recently wrote an open letter to Facebook and Google asking for a suspension of political advertising in the run-up to the 2020 US presidential election.

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Eisenstat called for regulation. “We need lawmakers and regulators to help protect our children, our cognitive capabilities, our public square and our democracy by creating guardrails and rules to deal directly with the incentives and business models of these platforms and the societal harms they

are causing," she wrote.

Eisenstat is far from the only former Facebook employee to publicly turn on the tech giant. Its cofounder Chris Hughes has repeatedly called for the company to be broken up, and Roger McNamee, an early investor who mentored Zuckerberg, has called the company "toxic."

Facebook did not immediately respond when contacted for comment.

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