

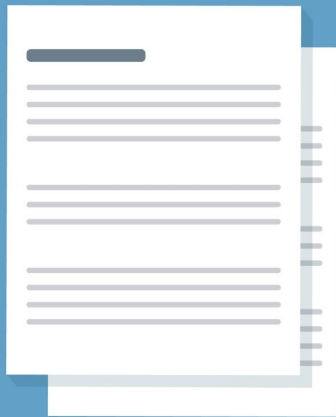
[Back to Newsroom](#)

Facebook

# Making Progress on Civil Rights – But Still a Long Way to Go

July 8, 2020

By Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer



To help personalize content, tailor and measure ads, and provide a safer experience, we use cookies. By clicking or navigating the site, you agree to allow our collection of information on and off Facebook through cookies. Learn more, including about available controls: [Cookies Policy](#)

Today, Facebook’s third civil rights audit report is being published — bringing to a close an independent two-year review of our policies and practices by noted civil liberties and civil rights expert Laura W. Murphy and Megan Cacace, partner in the civil rights law firm Relman Colfax, PLLC. This two-year journey has had a profound effect on the way we think about our impact on the world.

When we agreed to become the first social media company to undertake an audit of this kind, at the encouragement of the civil rights community, no one knew that the final report would be published at a time when racial injustice and police brutality is bringing millions of people to the streets — both at home and abroad — to campaign for change. We also had no idea that it would be published at a time when Facebook itself has faced heavy criticism from many in the civil rights community about hateful content on our platform and is subject to a boycott by a number of advertisers. While the audit was planned, and most of it carried out, long before recent events, its release couldn’t come at a more important time.

Facebook stands firmly against hate. Being a platform where everyone can make their voice heard is core to our mission, but that doesn’t mean it’s acceptable for people to spread hate. It’s not. We have clear policies against hate — and we strive constantly to get better and faster at enforcing them. We have made real progress over the years, but this work is never finished and we know what a big responsibility Facebook has to get better at finding and removing hateful content.

The audit looked at a wide range of civil rights issues, including our policies against hate. There are no quick fixes to these issues — nor should there be. This audit has been a deep analysis of how we can strengthen and advance civil rights at every level of our company but it is the beginning of the journey, not the end. What has become increasingly clear is that we have a long way to go. As hard as it has

To help personalize content, tailor and measure ads, and provide a safer experience, we use cookies. By clicking or navigating the site, you agree to allow our collection of information on and off Facebook through cookies. Learn more, including about available controls. [Cookies Policy](#)

been to have our shortcomings exposed by experts, it has undoubtedly been a really important process for our company. We would urge companies in our industry and beyond to do the same.

Thanks to Laura and Megan's leadership, and the continued advocacy of civil rights groups and leaders, we believe we are in a better place today than we were two years ago. Over the course of the audit process, we have made significant progress in a number of critical areas. But the auditors have been extremely candid with their feedback, urging us to go further in a range of areas. While we won't make every change they call for, we will put more of their proposals into practice. We have started to do that — and we are making new commitments today. But first it is important to acknowledge where the auditors believe we are still falling short. Specifically, the audit report finds:

- We need to enhance the team and the processes we've put in place to oversee civil rights issues. For example, by bringing more civil rights expertise in-house and better integrating civil rights issues into our policy and product work.
- We must go further on voter suppression and hate. In the auditors' view, our voter suppression policies have improved significantly, but their application, most notably in relation to President Trump's recent statements about mail-in-ballots, demonstrates a reading of our policies that is too narrow. They've also recommended that we do more to understand the specific ways that hate is targeted at particular communities so that we can address potential trends, policy gaps or enforcement issues.
- Some of the starkest criticism is reserved for our decision not to remove recent posts by President Trump. In the auditors' view, the emphasis we've placed on free expression has not been adequately balanced by the critical value of non-discrimination. The auditors also strongly disagree with our policy of Facebook through which we have, and believe that the audit result means more voice for those in positions of power.

To help personalize content, tailor and measure ads, and provide a safer experience, we use cookies. By clicking or navigating the site, you agree to allow our collection and use of cookies. Visit our [Cookie Policy](#) for more details.

- Underpinning all of this, the auditors conclude that we must do more to create a diverse and more inclusive culture, which, in turn, will improve the decisions we make about products and policies.

We have a long way to go — but we are making progress. In her introduction to the report, Laura W. Murphy says the audit has been meaningful and “has led to some significant improvements in the platform.” The progress we have made includes:

- We’re beginning the process of bringing much-needed civil rights expertise in-house, starting with a commitment to hire a civil rights leader who will continue to push us on these issues internally, and embedding staff with civil rights expertise on core teams.
- We’ve expanded our voter suppression policies since the 2016 and 2018 elections so that we now prohibit threats that voting will result in law enforcement consequences and attempts at coordinated interference, both of which have been known to intimidate and demobilize voters.
- We recently announced that we will include a link that directs people to our Voting Information Center on all posts about voting, including those from politicians, the goal being that we help make sure people have accurate, real-time information about voting processes in their districts.
- We’ve extended the protections we have in place for voting to the US 2020 census by adopting a robust census interference policy, which benefited from the auditors’ input and months of consultation with the US Census Bureau, civil rights groups and census experts.
- We’ve gone beyond existing hate speech protections to ban ads that are divisive and include fear-mongering statements.
- We have taken meaningful steps to build a more diverse and inclusive workforce, committing to bring on 30% more people of color, including 30% more Black people, in leadership positions.

To help personalize content, tailor and measure ads, and provide a safer experience, we

~~We announced a \$100 million investment in Black-owned small businesses, Black creators and nonprofits that serve the Black community in the US, and a commitment to spend at least \$100 million~~  
 controls: [Cookies Policy](#)

with Black-owned businesses, toward a goal of \$1 billion in annual spend with diverse suppliers by the end of 2021.

The report also acknowledges that the audit process has deepened our relationships with civil rights groups and leaders. Even if these relationships still generate serious criticism, what was previously ad-hoc and informal engagement has, over the course of two years, become consistent, meaningful and more rigorous.

I want to thank Laura W. Murphy, Megan Cacace and the team at Relman Colfax, and the wider civil rights community. In often difficult circumstances, they continued to show up to help us advance the civil rights of everyone who uses Facebook. You can read the full audit [here](#).

## Downloads

Civil Rights Audit

Categories: Facebook, Public Policy

Tags:

Community Standards and Enforcement, Elections

Like

Share

Tweet

 Email

## RELATED NEWS

to help personalize content, tailor and measure ads, and provide a safer experience, we use cookies. By clicking or navigating the site, you agree to allow our collection of information on and off Facebook through cookies. Learn more, including about available controls: [Cookies Policy](#)

[Facebook](#)

# A Second Update on Our Civil Rights Audit

We want to make sure we're advancing civil rights on our platform, and we're sharing a second report that details our efforts.

June 30, 2019

## FACEBOOK

Follow Us

### Company

[Newsroom](#)  
[Company Info](#)  
[Careers](#)  
[For Investors](#)  
[Brand Resources](#)

### Facebook Policies

[Community Standards](#)  
[Data Policy](#)  
[Cookie Policy](#)  
[Terms of Service](#)

### Technologies

[Facebook app](#)  
[Messenger](#)  
[Instagram](#)  
[WhatsApp](#)  
[Oculus](#)  
[Workplace](#)  
[Portal](#)  
[Novi](#)

### Help Center

[Facebook app Help Center](#)  
[Messenger Help Center](#)  
[Instagram Help Center](#)  
[WhatsApp Help Center](#)  
[Oculus Support](#)  
[Workplace Help Center](#)  
[Portal Help Center](#)



To help personalize content, tailor and measure ads, and provide a safer experience, we use cookies. By clicking or navigating the site, you agree to allow our collection of information on and off Facebook through cookies. Learn more, including about available controls: [Cookies Policy](#)