

Durbin Calls On Facebook To Stem Rise Of Hate And Conspiracy Groups On Its Platform

November 17 2020 3:00 PM



WASHINGTON – During today’s Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, which featured Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) pressed Mr. Zuckerberg on recent incidents where hate and conspiracy groups used Facebook to plan and recruit—including the conspiracy to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and the “Kenosha Guard militia,” which advocated for violence in the aftermath of the shooting of Jacob Blake and whose member later shot and killed two people on the streets of Kenosha, Wisconsin, on August 25, 2020.

Durbin noted that yesterday the FBI released its annual hate crime incident report. The report found that more people were killed in hate-motivated violence in 2019 than in any year since the FBI began collecting hate crimes data in the 1990s. The report also found that race-based hate crimes remained the most common type of hate crimes last year, and documented increases in religion-based hate crimes, anti-Hispanic hate crimes, and hate crimes targeting individuals based on gender identity.

“Given these statistics, it’s clear to me that it’s more important that social media combat this more than ever. This is not Antifa. These are documented hate crimes from the FBI... You said in a hearing, you do not allow hate groups on Facebook. Yet in May 2020, the Tech Transparency Project found more than 100 American white supremacist groups, many of them explicitly anti-Muslim, acting on the platform of group pages as well as other content. Facebook altered some of the content, but the hate groups largely remained,” Durbin said. “Are you looking the other way, Mr. Zuckerberg, at a potentially dangerous situation?”

Mr. Zuckerberg committed to Durbin that Facebook views this as an issue of the highest severity and one that they are focused on.

Durbin also slammed Senate Republicans for choosing to use the Senate Judiciary Committee to re-litigate their longstanding claims that internet media platforms censor conservative content instead of focusing on the most pressing issues facing Americans today.

“We live in a dangerous world—issues of national security, the worst public health crisis in modern times in America, and we are being challenged as to whether there is going to be a peaceful transition of power in America of the presidency. At that moment in time, we decided none of those topics were important, and what was important was to determine whether or not social media was discriminating against Republicans,” Durbin said. “I think there are more important and timely questions... but we are trying to determine whether or not the social media instruments of America are fair to the Republican Party.”

Video of Durbin’s remarks in Committee is available [here](#).

Audio of Durbin’s remarks in Committee is available [here](#).

Footage of Durbin’s remarks in Committee is available [here](#) for TV Stations.

Yesterday, Durbin joined Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) and 13 colleagues on a [letter](#) to Mr. Zuckerberg calling on Facebook to fully address the problem of anti-Muslim bigotry on its platform, which has enabled offline violence against Muslims in the United States and elsewhere around the world.

[Listen to RiverBender Radio! Listen to all the local stations, plus 3 NEW stations, in one convenient place.](#)