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Facebook — not its 'Supreme Court' — needs to enforce its moderation policies, according to one of the board members who called the company 'lazy' for pushing the Trump decision to the group

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May 6, 2021

A member of Facebook's Oversight Board said its decision not to rule on how long former President Donald Trump should stay suspended had more to do with the company's content moderation process.

John Samples — vice president of the Libertarian think tank Cato Institute and one of the members of the independent review board — made the comment in an [interview with Axios](#). It came a day after the [group upheld Facebook's decision that kept Trump barred from using the platform](#) but did not decide for Facebook how long the ban would last, which is what the company was asking the board to do.

"This wasn't a decision about Donald Trump — this was a decision about Facebook," Samples told Axios' Sara Fischer.

[Facebook suspended Trump indefinitely on January 7](#) after the siege on the US Capitol. The Oversight Board said that it supports Facebook's decision to remove Trump due to a risk of incitement of violence but that Facebook should be the one who makes its rules and enforces them.

"We're not here to invent new rules for Facebook," Helle Thorning-Schmidt, the former Prime Minister of Denmark and a fellow Facebook board member, said in the Axios interview. She said it was "lazy" of Facebook to ask the board to resolve an issue that was their responsibility to address, the issue being the duration of Trump's suspension.

The board members said in the interview that Facebook ought to apply the same standards to all users: private citizens and high-profile political figures alike. Doing so could also help combat what some on the right view as tech platforms' discrimination of conservative voices, Thorning-Schmidt told the outlet.

"There should be no special exception for political leaders," Samples told Axios.

The board was created in October to review content moderation decisions that Facebook makes, and the company poured \$130 million into the independent group. Companies like Facebook have historically taken a hands-off approach to content moderation policies. And so when the firm created its Oversight Board, which some have come to call a mini "supreme court," some experts expressed concern that it was a way for Facebook to skirt its responsibility.

The board made that same criticism in its case summary that it published yesterday.

"In applying a vague, standardless penalty and then referring this case to the Board to resolve, Facebook seeks to avoid its responsibilities," the Board wrote. "The Board declines Facebook's request and insists that Facebook apply and justify a defined penalty."

Facebook responded shortly after, noting that it was pleased with how the board upheld its decision but noted that the group did not specify how long Trump's suspension should last.

"Instead, the board criticized the open-ended nature of the suspension, calling it an 'indeterminate and standardless penalty,' and insisted we review our response," Facebook said in a blog post.