



Oversight Board Member: Facebook's Trump Referral Was 'Lazy'

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A member of the independent Oversight Board is knocking Facebook for its "lazy" referral of former President Donald Trump's suspension from the social media platform.

"We felt it was a bit lazy of Facebook to be sending over to us a penalty suggestion that didn't exist in their own rulebook, so to speak, in their own community standards," said former Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, an Oversight Board member, during an [Axios](#) event on Wednesday.

And she added: "We are not here to lift responsibility off Facebook. We're here to be independent."

The board decided Wednesday morning to uphold the site's ban of [Trump's account](#) — but it also ordered a new review of the "indefinite suspension" to take place within six months, leaving the door open slightly for a future Trump reinstatement.

Facebook and the other leading social media sites suspended Trump's accounts — each of which attracted legions of followers and detractors eager to amplify or castigate the 45th president's every pronouncement — soon after the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol attack.

On Jan. 21, Facebook Vice President of Global Affairs Nick Clegg wrote that Trump's indefinite suspension on that platform and Instagram would be referred to the Oversight Committee.

"The board was established last year to make the final call on some of the most difficult content decisions Facebook makes," Clegg wrote in the post. "It is an independent body and its decisions are binding — they can't be overruled by CEO Mark Zuckerberg or anyone else at Facebook."

Trump blasted the decision to uphold his suspension.

"The people of our country will not stand for it!" he said. "These corrupt social media companies must pay a political price, and must never again be allowed to destroy and decimate our electoral process."

Axios noted the board said that Facebook should have deleted Trump's accounts or suspended them for a specified period of time. It also mandated the social media giant find a "proportionate response" for

Trump's alleged violations within six months.

"I think it is possible that this case, or other cases, could make it (back) to the board and we could ... it will involve an actual decision that would require us to vote up or down and have a binding decision," said John Samples, vice president at the Cato Institute and an Oversight Board member, who also spoke at the Axios event.

The most likely impact of the board's decision will be to force Facebook to seriously look at whether to use arbitrary punishments to enforce its rules, Thorning-Schmidt suggested.

"In the long run, they will benefit from the clarity and the principled decision- making that we are pushing them into," she said.