

Facebook's commitment to the Oversight Board

Facebook is built to give people a voice. Free expression is fundamental to who we are as a company, just as it is to a free, inclusive and democratic society. We believe the more people who have the power to express themselves, the more progress our society makes together. We want to make sure our products and policies support this.

We also recognize that there are times when people use their voice to endanger others. That's why we have Community Standards to articulate what is and isn't allowed on our platforms. When we enforce these policies, we follow a set of values -- authenticity, safety, privacy, and dignity -- guided by international human rights standards. Our commitment to free expression is paramount, but we still need to keep people safe and take down harmful content.

We are responsible for enforcing our policies every day and we make millions of content decisions every week. But ultimately I don't believe private companies like ours should be making so many important decisions about speech on our own. That's why I've called for governments to set clearer standards around harmful content. It's also why we're now giving people a way to appeal our content decisions by establishing the independent Oversight Board.

If someone disagrees with a decision we've made, they can appeal to us first, and soon they will be able to further appeal to this independent board. The board's decision will be binding, even if I or anyone at Facebook disagrees with it. The board will use our values to inform its decisions and explain its reasoning openly and in a way that protects people's privacy.

The board will be an advocate for our community -- supporting people's right to free expression, and making sure we fulfill our responsibility to keep people safe. As an independent organization, we hope it gives people confidence that their views will be heard, and that Facebook doesn't have the ultimate power over their expression. Just as our Board of Directors keeps Facebook accountable to our shareholders, we believe the Oversight Board can do the same for our community.

Over the past year, we've gotten feedback from experts around the world on what this board should look like. We've researched similar bodies, released a draft charter, run a public consultation process, engaged in workshops and published a summary of the feedback. This charter reflects much of what we've heard, and it gives answers to some of the biggest questions we've been considering: How should board members be selected? How do we protect their independence from Facebook but also make sure they're committed to our principles? How do people petition the board? How does the board decide which cases to hear?

In this charter, Facebook is making several commitments to the board. We're committing to implement the board's content decisions and taking action regarding its advisory opinions on our policies. We're committing to preserving and protecting the board's ability to exercise its independent judgement. And we're committing to providing the board with the information and resources it needs to make informed decisions.

This charter brings us another step closer to establishing the board, but there is a lot of work still ahead. We expect the board will only hear a small number of cases at first, but over time we hope it will expand its scope and potentially include more companies across the industry as well.

Building institutions that protect free expression and online communities is important for the future of the internet. I'm looking forward to seeing how the board evolves. Thank you to everyone who has given their time, effort and energy to this project to help get it right.

Mark Zuckerberg
Founder and CEO, Facebook