RECOMMENDATION: Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors

RECOMMENDATION: Voting & Census Interference (Content + Ads)
Recommendation: Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors
Issue

We have fewer restrictions on speech about public figures because we want to allow critical commentary and discussion of these individuals; however, we recognize that critical speech can be particularly harmful to minors, some of whom are involuntarily public figures, and we want to balance the benefits of critical speech against the risk of harm.
Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors

Overview

Recommendation:
1. Distinguish between involuntary and voluntary public figures
2. Identify additional protections for involuntary minor public figures
3. Apply private individual protections to all minors under the age of 13

External Outreach: 18 external engagements

Working Groups: 5 cross-functional working groups
Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors

Status Quo: Public Figure

**Public figure definition** (no distinction between minors/adults, voluntary/involuntary): People who are featured in the news or who have a large public audience

**Allowed for minors who are considered public figures:**

- Targeted cursing
- Expressions of disgust
- Negative character/ability claims
- Allegations of criminal activity
- Neutral/positive physical descriptions
Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors

Examples

- Trayvon Martin
  - Trayvon Martin was a thug and a dog #FreeZimmerman
  - Trayvon Martin (whom Obama said "could have been my son") was no...

- Ugly white kid
  - Remember that ugly white kid who got famous for nothing I believe his name is alex from target

- Boy A and Boy B
  - Two teenage boys have been found guilty of murdering 34-year-old...
  - What evil cunts, they should be locked away.
Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors

Research Findings

- There’s no way to predict the virality of content, but external research confirms:
  - Minors most at-risk: Involved in Crisis/Public Interest, Celebrity’s Children, Wrong Name/False Association, Random Viral Content Produced
  - Intersections at-risk for higher harassment: females, LGBTQ youth, politically engaged

- Scholars studying bullying and harassment online are moving towards greater understanding of online “aggression or abuses” across levels of severity (i.e., death threats, doxing, by known/unknown actors)

- Scholars propose use of internet public figure as involuntary public figure is rendered obsolete given private and public figures have access to the same communication/media channels to engage with public

- Public opinion polls want social media companies to limit online harassment

Policy Relevance: Recommendation should consider intersectionality of young people who become targets; language of new policy should align to the research suggested terms and internal taxonomies, and move towards more restrictive protections

We spoke to 17 stakeholders, including legal experts, journalists, safety professionals and minors who have become public figures involuntarily.
Involuntary public figures who are minors

External Outreach

Key themes:

• Facebook should protect minors who are thrust into the public eye involuntarily

• Minors are not as prepared as adults – socially or physiologically – to handle online abuse

• Minors can, however, make choices about how to engage with their fame

• If minors seek to leverage their fame, it makes sense to give them a lesser level of protection (though still more protection than similar adults)
Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors

Status Quo

Only distinguish between private individuals and public figures, no further distinctions

**Pros**
- Allows critical speech and discussion of public figures
- Removes the worst speech targeted against public and private individuals
- Clear distinction between public and private figures makes policy easier to enforce

**Cons**
- Does not recognize idea of involuntary fame
- Does not provide heightened protections for minors who become involuntarily famous
Option 2

Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors

Increase protections based on non “true celebrity” status

Enhanced protection for all minor public figures who are not “true celebrities”

- True celebrities: public figures by profession (e.g., actors, singers, influencers)
- This would not distinguish between the way the minor became famous (i.e., whether they had agency, was a victim, perpetrated a crime) as long as they are not “true celebrities”
- This would not draw a line based on whether they engaged with their fame or not

**Pros**

- Better addresses emotional impact of sudden fame
- Provides more protection for more minors

**Cons**

- Asymmetric protection for minors who are voluntarily participating in the public debate
Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors
Increase protections based on agency

Enhanced protection for minor public figures who didn’t have any agency in the defining event and are not “true celebrities”

- This option distinguishes between someone who is famous because of something that happened to them (e.g., Parkland students, Steubenville rape victim, Trayvon Martin) versus someone who had agency in the event that resulted in public attention (e.g., Covington student, minors who perpetrate a crime/murder/rape)

**Pros**

- More protections for public figures who have no agency

**Cons**

- Difficult to understand intent and agency in fame-making moments
- Asymmetric protection for minors who are voluntarily participating in the public debate
- Difficult to operationalize
Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors
Increase protections based on engagement with fame

Enhanced protection for minor public figures who have not engaged with their fame and are not “true celebrities”
• Content Policy to make decisions based on engagement signals, including:
  • Ongoing media engagements/public speaking
  • Social media presence: followers/fan count, verification
• All minors under 13 will receive full private individual protections

Pros
• Enhanced protections for minors trying to maintain privacy
• Explicable, globally applicable distinction

Cons
• Relies on Facebook’s assessment of who has / hasn’t engaged with fame
• Does not recognize how they became a public figure (whether they had agency in the event)
Involuntary public figures who are minors

Never treat involuntary minors as public figures (even if they engage)

Always treat involuntary minors as public figures (even if they don’t engage)

External Outreach

Treat involuntary minors as public figures only if/when they engage
Next Steps

Developments
Implement policy for minors under 13, establish definitions around “true celebrity”, and engagement with fame

Comms
Work with Communications on external language

Launch
Launch enforcement
## Involuntary Public Figures who are Minors

### What’s the gap in protections?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Removed under Status Quo</th>
<th>Policy Line</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calls for death, disease or self-injury</td>
<td>&quot;Go kill yourself! I hope you die&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual harassment</td>
<td>&quot;What a slut!* &quot;He has HIV&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks based on sexual assault or domestic violence</td>
<td>&quot;She got raped, whatever, she got what was coming to her&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats to release PII</td>
<td>&quot;I'm going to leak David's phone number*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Harassment</td>
<td>Repeated, unwanted contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Crisis Actor&quot; Claims</td>
<td>&quot;Those Parkland kids made the whole thing up*&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Option 1 - Remove the above and all of these for Involuntarily famous minors

- Depiction of physical bullying where context further degrades the individual
- Comparisons to animals (currently remove with purposeful exposure)
- Content that negatively draws attention to physical characteristics (currently remove with purposeful exposure)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Line</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted Cursing</td>
<td>&quot;Luke's an asshole*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressions of Disgust</td>
<td>&quot;He's disgusting*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative physical descriptions</td>
<td>&quot;She's got the worlds ugliest face*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative character and ability claims</td>
<td>&quot;He's an idiot <em>She's lazy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion</td>
<td>&quot;Jane should be kicked out of her school for that behavior*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content questioning hygiene</td>
<td>&quot;She looks like she hasn't had a shower in weeks*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Option 2A: Option 2 for Involuntarily famous minors UNLESS they’ve been accused of criminal activity

- Expressions of contempt
- Allegations of criminal activity
- Claims about romantic involvement, sexual orientation, gender identity, or lack of sexual activity
- Claims about religious identity or blasphemy
- Neutral or positive physical descriptions
- Non-negative character or ability claims

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Policy Line</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressions of contempt</td>
<td>&quot;I don't like Bobby&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegations of criminal activity</td>
<td>&quot;He raped me*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims about romantic involvement, sexual orientation, gender identity, or lack of sexual activity</td>
<td>&quot;Did you know John's gay? &quot;Sarah's dating Kyle&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims about religious identity or blasphemy</td>
<td>&quot;Dan is a blasphemer* &quot;Lauren is Muslim*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral or positive physical descriptions</td>
<td>&quot;She's so pretty*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-negative character or ability claims</td>
<td>&quot;He's a hero*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Option 3 - Provide the same protections as for minor private individuals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Line</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</thead>
</table>
Recommendation: Voting & Census Interference (Content + Ads)
We prohibit specific types of voter interference including the misrepresentation of dates, times, and methods of voting, and we want to expand our policies to protect against more types of interference in voting and census contexts; however, expanding our current voter interference policy may limit political speech and pose operational challenges due to variations in electoral systems across the globe.
Voting and Census Interference

Overview

**Recommendation:** Prohibit certain types of census misrepresentation; remove explicit voter/census interference; remove some discouragement of civic participation. *(Note: See slide 29 for final policy language that was adopted.)*

**External Outreach:** 35 external engagements

**Working Groups:** 6 multi-disciplinary working groups
Voter and Census Interference
Research Findings

- It’s important to distinguish the terms that fall under “disenfranchisement,” deprivation of civic rights
  - **Interference:** prevents or subverts an act of participation in civic processes.
  - **Suppression:** raises the perceived costs of participation in civic processes.
  - **Demobilization:** persuades citizens to abstain from participation in civic processes.

- Encouragement of demobilization should be protected speech, despite users challenges to identifying false or misleading information

- Historically marginalized groups are most at-risk of targeted discrimination campaign, on and offline.

- Global policy has limitations during content spikes such as election weeks, additional strategies needed

**Policy Relevance:** The recommendation should mitigate interference, rather than demobilization and suppression; it should consider better informing users and design additional strategies to address the limitations of the revised policy around times of content spikes.

*Sources: Internal research; Daniels, 2010; Hansen & Lim, 2019*
We spoke to 39 stakeholders, representing the following areas: (1) academia, (2) civil society, and (3) government entities.
Stakeholders expressed that:

1. The current policy, primarily targeting misrepresentations of times, dates, locations for voting, is not robust enough to capture widespread civic interference on the platform.

2. Local context plays an integral part in setting parameters for civic interference policies. The elections and census process are highly regional with rules and process differing around the world.

3. All governments are NOT created equal. In many regions people are faced with issues of voter suppression, election manipulation, and various other illegal and unfair civic processes. The voice of opposition – protesting civic engagement- to fight back against these corrupt practices is often necessary to shine a light on these issues and eventually possibly bring about positive change.

4. Facebook should consider how to engage its community proactively - working with entities already engaged in this space - to help elevate accurate and informative content surrounding civic activities.
Voting & Census Interference

Option 1: Status Quo

REMOVE
- Voter fraud defined as any offers to buy or sell votes with cash or gifts
- Voter suppression defined as:
  - Misrepresentation of the dates, locations, times, and methods for voting or voter registration
  - Misrepresentation of who can vote, qualifications for voting, whether a vote will be counted, and what information and/or materials must be provided in order to vote

Pros
- Removes voter interference that has the potential to contribute to offline civic harm
- Clear and operable definitions of suppression and fraud

Cons
- Does not address other forms of voter interference that may surface
- Does not account for other forms of civic interference that may surface
Chanito (Candidate) drops out of the race and declines/turns down in favor of Lili Campos and El PAN (Mexican political party)
Voting & Census Interference
Option 2: Prohibit Census Misrepresentation

**REMOVED**
- Offers to buy or sell votes with cash or gifts
- Misrepresentation of the dates, locations, times, and methods for voting, voter registration or **census participation**
- Misrepresentation of who can vote, qualifications for voting, whether a vote will be counted, and what information and/or materials must be provided in order to vote
- Misrepresentation of who can **participate in the census and what information and/or materials must be provided in order to participate in the census**

**Pros**
- Removes voter interference that has the potential to contribute to offline civic harm
- Accounts for other types of civic interference by including census protections

**Cons**
- May limit political speech
- Does not address other forms of voter interference that may surface
- Operationally difficult to enforce at scale
Voting & Census Interference
Option 2: Add Census Protections

Chanito (Candidate) drops out of the race and declines/turns down in favor of Lili Campos and El PAN (Mexican political party)
### Voting & Census Interference

**Option 3: Remove Census Misrepresentation + Remove Explicit Attempts at Interference + Remove Some Discouragement of Civic Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Statements that advocate, provide instructions, or show explicit intent to bypass legal voting or census processes.</td>
<td>Difficult to determine when content is intended to bypass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>[Escalation Only] Misrepresentation of whether a candidate is running or not.</td>
<td>Limiting political speech and difficult to determine purpose (ex: satire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advocating that the votes of groups/individuals, based on their protected characteristic, should not be counted.</td>
<td>May limit political speech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pros**
- Addresses primary concerns of voter interference
- Expanded protections against exclusionary speech

**Cons**
- Difficult to determine when content is intended to bypass
- Limiting political speech and difficult to determine purpose (ex: satire)
- May limit political speech
Voting & Census Interference

Option 3: Remove Census Misrepresentation + Remove Explicit Attempts at Interference + Remove Some Discouragement of Civic Participation

Note: After this recommendation was presented at the PPF, we continued to discuss our efforts to protect against census interference with key internal and external stakeholders. The policy recommendation that we ultimately adopted expands upon what was originally presented to include (new policy provisions highlighted in red):

- Misrepresentation of the dates, locations, and times, and methods for voting or voter registration or census participation
- Misrepresentation of who can vote, qualifications for voting, whether a vote will be counted, and what information and/or materials must be provided in order to vote.
- Misrepresentation of whether a candidate is running or not
- Misrepresentation of who can participate in the census and what information or materials must be provided in order to participate
- Calls for coordinated interference that would affect an individual’s ability to participate in the census
- Content stating that census or voting participation may or will result in law enforcement consequences (e.g., arrest, deportation, imprisonment)
- Misrepresentation of government involvement in the census, including that an individual’s census information will be shared with another government agency
- Other misrepresentations related to voting in an official election or census participation may be subject to false news standards, as referenced in section 20
Voting & Census Interference

Option 3: Add Census Protections + Remove Explicit Attempts at Interference + Remove Some Discouragement of Civic Participation

Chanito (Candidate) drops out of the race and declines/turns down in favor of Lili Campos and El PAN (Mexican political party)
Voting & Census Interference
External Outreach

Status Quo
Least Restrictive
Most Restrictive
Voter Interference (Ads)

**Status Quo**

**Policy language** -- We allow ads related to Election Suppression (ads related to social issues, politics, or elections that aim to discourage people from voting in an election) but require heightened transparency.

This includes ads that portray voting as useless/meaningless and/or advise users not to vote.
Voter Interference (Ads)
Election Suppression ads allowed with transparency

“Don’t be afraid remember we created politics and it was a mistake. I don’t fear governments nor its politicians, neither should you. Put an end to it. IT STARTS WITH NOT VOTING.”

“Most of your neighbors are Early Voting this week, but you’re probably too busy or too tired of politics to bother. That’s just fine with Grandma and Grandpa...Dear young people Don’t Vote”
Voter Interference (Ads)
‘Do Not Vote’ (U.S. only)

Ads that explicitly discourage people from voting in an election would be rejected

Pros
• Removes voter interference that has the potential to contribute to offline civic harm
• Recognizes not voting as a political tactic outside U.S. where it is commonly viewed as important political speech

Cons
• May limit political speech
• Inconsistent regional application of policy (U.S. only)
Voter Interference (Ads)

Election Suppression (U.S. only)

Reject all “election suppression” ads, including any attempts to discourage participation or portray voting as useless/meaningless and/or advise users not to vote

**Pros**
- Removes voter interference that has the potential to contribute to offline harm
- Recognizes not voting as a political tactic outside U.S. where it is commonly viewed as important political speech
- Captures inferred messaging as well as explicit messaging

**Cons**
- May limit political speech
- Inconsistent regional application of policy (U.S. only)
Voter Interference (Ads)
Global “Election Suppression” Policy

An “Election Suppression” policy would be applied globally, thereby rejecting all ads under this definition

**Pros**
- Global consistency in the application of the policy

**Cons**
- Prohibits “don’t vote” message, which is a known political strategy and important political discourse in many countries
- Considerable operations and infrastructure lift
Next Steps

Developments

Coordinate with cross-functional internal teams to ensure that expansion of the policy aligns with other workstreams related to civic interference

Comms

Work with Communications on external language

Launch

Launch enforcement