

Re: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Bloomberg's meme spree prompts changes in Facebook, Instagram rules

From: Lee Carosi Dunn <[REDACTED]@google.com>
To: "Hayes, Bradley F. EOP/OMB" <[REDACTED]>
Date: Thu, 20 Feb 2020 13:26:30 -0500

Best. Line. Ever.

Lee Dunn

Google

[REDACTED]

Google Voice: [REDACTED]

Android Mobile [REDACTED]

On Thu, Feb 20, 2020 at 1:19 PM Hayes, Bradley F. EOP/OMB <[REDACTED]> wrote:

I've meant to respond since you emailed. I very much enjoyed catching up and appreciate the conversation. You absolutely do not need to send me a thank you note ... my Southern mother is just happy that such an accomplished woman would be seen in public with me.

From: Lee Carosi Dunn <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2020 5:41 PM
To: Hayes, Bradley F. EOP/OMB <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Bloomberg's meme spree prompts changes in Facebook, Instagram rules

Dear Valentine,

I thought you would find this interesting per our lunch conversation.

Thank you for a wonderful lunch and a fun time catching up. I am so excited for your new role, and so proud of your Admin career -- so many cool positions.

I will send you the other information next, but please send me your address so I can send you a proper thank you note for lunch as your Southern mother would approve.

Thanks for your friendship and so happy to see you doing so well. Don't be a stranger.

Lee

Lee Dunn

Google

Ex 6 - (5 U.S.C. Sec. 552(b)(6))

Google Voice: Ex 6 - (5 U.S.C. Sec. 552(b)(6))

Android Mobile: Ex 6 - (5 U.S.C. Sec. 552(b)(6))

----- Forwarded message -----

From: POLITICO Pro <Ex 6 - (5 U.S.C. Sec. 552(b)(6))>

Date: Fri, Feb 14, 2020 at 5:28 PM

Subject: Bloomberg's meme spree prompts changes in Facebook, Instagram rules

To: <Ex 6 - (5 U.S.C. Sec. 552(b)(6))>

Bloomberg's meme spree prompts changes in Facebook, Instagram rules

By Nancy Scola

02/14/2020 05:28 PM EST

Presidential contender Mike Bloomberg's spree of often-surreal social media memes is having one concrete impact — it prompted Facebook to make another change Friday in its rules for paid political content.

From now on, Facebook and its Instagram subsidiary will allow "branded content" from political candidates — a practice in which a campaign pays so-called influencers to place supportive posts on their accounts. Previously, a Facebook spokesperson said, the platforms had banned such content from politicians by default.

Under the new rules, the new rules will have to be clearly marked as sponsored.

The spokesperson said in a statement that the rule change had been under consideration for some time, with meme posts gaining traction as a campaign tool, and with both political campaigns and government agencies inquiring about the company's policies on their use. Bloomberg drew new attention to the issue this week after paying influential Instagram personalities to post a series of posts meant to look as if the Democratic contender were sending oddball direct messages to the influencer, such as "I put Lamborghini doors on the Escalade."

The New York Times reported Thursday that the Bloomberg campaign is working with a company called Meme 2020 to produce sponsored posts to run on third-party accounts. They bore the disclaimer: "yes this is really #sponsored by @mikebloomberg."

"After hearing from multiple campaigns, we agree that there's a place for branded content in political discussion on our platforms," the Facebook spokesperson said. "We're allowing US-based political candidates to work with creators to run this content, provided the political candidates are authorized and the creators disclose any paid partnerships through our branded content tools."

However, Facebook won't treat the sponsored content — which are a financial transaction between two outside parties — in exactly the same way it treats political ads, from which Facebook gets a cut.

Sponsored political posts won't be included in the library of political ads that the company launched after the 2016 U.S. presidential election, unless the posts are converted into paid advertisements using the site's so-called boosting tools. And unlike candidates' ads, sponsored political posts could be subject to fact-checking if the message of the sponsored posts is in the voice of the third-party poster, and not the candidate.

Previously, Facebook had prohibited sponsored posts by campaigns as part of a broader ban on political entities' use of a suite of tools that involve financial transactions, like subscription services and so-called ad breaks. It had banned them out of fear that those practices could be considered campaign contributions by Facebook.

But Facebook points out that, unlike with paid ads, it has no role in the money changing hands behind sponsored posts.

"Branded content is different from advertising, but in either case we believe it's important people know

when they're seeing paid content on our platforms," the spokesperson said.

Candidates' use of paid memes still falls in a gray area of federal election law, a gap unlikely to be filled by Election Day.

A spokesperson for the Federal Election Commission told POLITICO that "commission regulations do not explicitly address social media influencers."

"Public communications that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a candidate for federal office and placed on the Internet for a fee must include a disclaimer to inform that public of the identify that entity that paid for the communication," said the spokesperson, who also alluded to the fact that three of the FEC's six seats are vacant. "As you may already know, the agency is currently operating without a working quorum, and as a result, the Commission is unable to move forward at the moment on any new rulemakings."

To view online:

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