

Facebook Shareholder Meeting - Proposal #8 Statement
David W. Almasi, Vice President
National Center for Public Policy Research, May 30, 2019

I'm David Almasi of the National Center for Public Policy Research and I move proposal eight, which seeks to increase ideological diversity on the company's board of directors.

Last year, a colleague and I met with someone from the law firm of Covington and Burling, which was commissioned by Facebook to substantiate and analyze allegations of bias against conservatives on Facebook.ⁱ We reported that our Facebook traffic had plummeted dramatically over the past few years. The investigator asked if our organization discusses climate change. It does. We were informed that this aspect of our programming – posts seeking to continue the active debate about the science of climate – probably kept us from reaching more people about all of the issues addressed by the National Center.

Also last year, Facebook senior engineer Brian Amerige complained on an internal message board that “[w]e have a problem with political diversity.” He continued: “We are a political monoculture that’s intolerant of different views... We claim to welcome all perspectives, but are quick to attack – often in mobs – anyone who presents a view that appears to be in opposition to left-leaning ideology.”ⁱⁱ While Amerige initially sought to work with management to promote political diversity, he eventually left Facebook over disagreements about a free speech policy he told Wired was “dangerous and impractical.”ⁱⁱⁱ

One of Amerige’s remaining legacies is the internal online group “FBers for Political Diversity.”^{iv} This group revealed that Facebook had created a list of so-called “hate agents” including black conservative Candace Owens and Lebanese-American activist Bridgette Gabriel. Facebook confirmed the existence of this list to Breitbart.com, and it’s believed the list played an integral role in the purging of several people from Facebook earlier this month.^v

And I’ll just throw in that Palmer Luckey – the guy behind the Oculus technology advertised everywhere these days as the next big thing – alleges he was fired from Facebook because he made a \$10,000 donation to an anti-Hillary group in 2016.^{vi}

Whether you’re willing to admit there’s a bias at Facebook is beyond the point right now. In business, perception is often reality. Our proposal provides a tangible way for the company to combat its bias. When the company takes overtly political positions on legal and policy issues, it would benefit from having voices from both sides of the aisle in the room. The company would be much less likely to engage in bias against conservatives if it had a few right-leaning folks in positions of power. If their voices were heard, it would go a long way towards fixing both the actual bias and the perception of bias.

From the way your one known conservative board member, Peter Thiel, is frequently vilified and called upon to be dismissed by the left, it’s clear that you need to be intentional about seeking out and maintaining diversity in the Facebook boardroom.^{vii}

All of this points to the necessity of implementing our proposal. We believe that boards that incorporate diverse perspectives can think more critically and oversee corporate managers more effectively. Appointing a few conservatives may help the company avoid groupthink and address biases. That's a win for investors and a win for true diversity.

Please join me in voting yes on proposal eight. Thank you.

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ⁱ <https://www.axios.com/scoop-facebook-committing-to-internal-pobias-audit-1525187977-160aaa3a-3d10-4b28-a4bb-b81947bd03e4.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/28/technology/inside-facebook-employees-political-bias.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.wired.com/story/inside-facebook-debate-over-political-diversity/>

^{iv} <https://www.wired.com/story/inside-facebook-debate-over-political-diversity/>

^v <https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2019/05/17/exclusive-facebook-includes-candace-owens-on-hate-agents-list/>

^{vi} <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/05/22/oculus-co-founder-i-got-fired-from-facebook-for-no-reason-at-all.html>

^{vii} <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mattdrange/2016/06/20/zuckerberg-thiel-board/#334ee255c99c>