



RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

September 27, 2021

Secretary Laurel Lee
Department of State
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Secretary Lee:

According to a review of internal Facebook documents conducted by the Wall Street Journal, Facebook has created a shadow list of certain users who are immune from Facebook's enforcement actions on posting content. These elites – selected by Facebook behind closed doors – are able to post material without being subject to the opaque review process that normal users endure. This "whitelist" effectively creates two classes of speakers on Facebook's platform: those who are privileged and those who are not.

According to the Wall Street Journal, this previously undisclosed double standard "at times effectively grant[ed] incumbents in elections an advantage over challengers. The discrepancy was most prevalent in state and local races[.]" (See Jeff Horwitz, "Facebook Says Its Rules Apply to All. Company Documents Reveal a Secret Elite That's Exempt." Wall Street Journal, September 13, 2021.) If this report is true, Facebook has put its thumb on the scale of numerous state and local races in a disturbing and concealed fashion whose scope is known only to Facebook. Floridians deserve to know how much this corporate titan has influenced their elections.

I hereby direct that your office immediately investigate this alleged election interference caused by Facebook through its whitelisting program – and any other previously undisclosed program within Facebook – in order to determine whether any violations of Florida's election laws took place. Your office should use all legal means to uncover any such violations, including but not limited to, issuing subpoenas, conducting witness interviews, reviewing all available information and consulting with law enforcement.

The thought of technology companies clandestinely manipulating elections is an affront to the basic principles of our republic. Floridians deserve to have faith that their elections are fair and free from intrusion by Big Tech monopolies like Facebook.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. DeSantis".

Ron DeSantis
Governor