

Facebook's Quiet Battle to Kill the First Transparency Law for Online Political Ads | Quartz

By Heather Timmons and Hanna Kozłowska

March 23, 2018

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said yesterday that the company welcomes more regulation, particularly to bring transparency to political advertising online. But in recent months, Facebook has been quietly fighting lawmakers to keep them from passing an act that does exactly that, campaign transparency advocates and Congressional staff tell Quartz.

The Honest Ads Act was introduced last October to close a loophole that has existed since politicians started advertising on the internet, and was expected by many to sail through Congress. Coming as Congress investigated how Russia used tech companies to influence the 2016 election, it was considered by many in Washington DC to be the bare minimum lawmakers could do to address the problem.

The act introduces disclosure and disclaimer rules to online political advertising. Tech companies would have to keep copies of election ads, and make them available to the public. The ads would also have to contain disclaimers similar to those included in TV or print political ads, informing voters who paid for the ad, how much, and whom they targeted.