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# Policymakers call out social media platform's 'misinformation negligence' as we approach election amid pandemic | Institute for Data, Democracy & Politics

By Institute for Data, Democracy & Politics

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IDDP's second international forum on social media disinformation, held on June 29, 2020, focused on the negative consequences of digital platforms' misinformation negligence for free and fair elections.

The first panel featured lawmakers Congressman Adam Schiff and Minister Dominic LeBlanc. Maria Ressa, founder and CEO of Rappler, and Sasha Havlicek, founder and CEO of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue. The panelists offered their perspectives on the dangers disinformation and hate speech circulating pose to election integrity around the world. Panelists also discussed the need for an engaged and informed citizenry as a defense against threats to democracy.

In a separate address to the forum, Stacey Abrams, founder of Fair Fight, echoed these sentiments. "We must hold social media platforms responsible because they are the single most effective conduit of information to some of the most vulnerable and least resilient voices in our democracy," Abrams said.

Following Abrams' address, a second panel of lawmakers and witnesses highlighted the harmful impacts of voter suppression efforts circulating on social media. US Senator Mazie Hirono, Phumzile van Damme, Member of Parliament from South Africa, and Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson highlighted the work they have done to combat election disinformation voter disenfranchisement.

Witnesses Kailee Scales, Managing Director of Black Lives Matter Global Network, and Héctor Sánchez Barba, Executive Director and CEO of Mi Familia Vota, also highlighted the ways in which disinformation and online threats target and disproportionately impact Black, Latinx, and immigrant communities.

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