

Facebook Said It Would Stop Pushing Users to Join Partisan Political Groups. It Didn't. | The Markup

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In the run-up to the 2020 presidential election, Facebook said it was taking “emergency” measures to prevent people from using the platform to spread misinformation or coordinate violence. Among those measures, CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified under oath before Congress in October, Facebook had stopped recommending all “political content or social issue groups”—a practice its own internal research has suggested steers users toward divisive and extremist content.

Days after a riot organized at least partially on social media overtook the U.S. Capitol, Facebook reiterated in a Jan. 11 blog post that it was “not recommending civic groups for people to join.”

But contrary to Facebook’s claims, The Markup found the platform continued to recommend political groups to its users throughout December. We found 12 political groups among the top 100 groups recommended to the more than 1,900 Facebook users in our Citizen Browser project, which tracks links and group recommendations served to a nationwide panel of Facebook users. Our data shows Facebook also continued to recommend political groups throughout January, including after it renewed its promise not to on Jan. 11.

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