

With Conservatives Clamoring to Meet With Facebook, This Leader Says 'No Thanks'

After his social media giant took a public relations hit over allegations Facebook was censoring material from overtly conservative or Christian websites from its news feed, Mark Zuckerberg invited a group of conservative leaders to meet and discuss the issue.

Nationally syndicated radio host Glenn Beck, FOX News Channel hostess Dana Perino, the American Enterprise Institute's Arthur Brooks and CNN political commentator S.E. Cupp are among those expected to attend. And the Media Research Council's Dan Gainor is just tickled pink the billionaire even wants to meet with conservatives at all.

But at least one conservative leader won't be there, and he's not afraid to explain why. In a statement released Tuesday morning, American Conservative Union Chairman Matt Schlapp said he refused Facebook's invitation to attend the meeting:

We appreciate their invitation, especially since our organization and annual conference, CPAC, were specifically targeted.

However, we do not believe that the problem between Facebook and CPAC and the broader conservative community is merely a communication problem. Facebook and Mr. Zuckerberg are drawing the wrong conclusion from the negative response from conservatives. It appears that they believe they can avoid having to answer for their actions by hosting conservative luminaries at their state-of-the-art headquarters.

Facebook has a history of agitating against conservatives and conservative policies, especially when it comes to ACU's

own conference, CPAC. The facts are:

- 1) Facebook staff has admitted to suppressing content about CPAC.*
- 2) Facebook rejected ACU's overtures for Facebook to play a meaningful role at CPAC.*
- 3) The deck is stacked: CPAC content egregiously underperforms on Facebook compared to Twitter and other platforms by factors of 10.*
- 4) The Facebook Trending News Chief, Tom Stocky, is a maxed-out donor to Hillary Clinton.*
- 5) Of the 1,000 political donations from Facebook employees, 80 percent have gone to liberals.*
- 6) Facebook holds liberal positions on important issues such as privacy, property and priests.*

We will not be attending this meeting. We know one meeting cannot possibly resolve all of the above mentioned issues.

Schlapp said, instead, he would like to have "real engagement" with Zuckerberg and Facebook's management about "whether pastors and priests can have full access to Facebook, or if we could come to terms on the FCC's intrusive rulemaking on privacy, or how we could actually protect intellectual property owners." He said the social media giant has "harmed its credibility with conservatives," but he's willing to sit down to discuss how they can "better strike a balance between sterile algorithms choosing news content and when a human curator decides to put a finger on the scale."

"If Facebook wants the benefit of the doubt, they need to start with complete transparency on how decisions are made concerning its newsfeeds," he said. "Inducing people to sign up for a Facebook account under the potentially fraudulent assertion that the company is neutral on news content has serious repercussions. We applaud Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune's efforts to ask the tough questions so Facebook users can know the truth."

Schlapp said the planned meeting is only intended to help Zuckerberg and Facebook save face by “winning the day’s news cycle.” The current fallout from the allegations about bias and censorship “exposed the rift” between the social media giant’s “liberal perspective” and the “hundred of millions of Americans” who consider themselves conservatives.

“We hope to have substantive interactions that can begin to resolve these issues,” he said.