
Facebook shuts down anti-quarantine protests at states' request

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Facebook shuts down anti-quarantine protests at states' request

By Steven Overly

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WASHINGTON — Facebook is blocking anti-quarantine protesters from using the site to organize in-person gatherings in states that require residents to stay in their homes due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The world's largest social network has already removed protest messages in California, New Jersey and Nebraska from its site at the urging of state governments who say those events are prohibited by stay-at-home orders, a company spokesperson said.

"Unless government prohibits the event during this time, we allow it to be organized on Facebook. For this same reason, events that defy government's guidance on social distancing aren't allowed on Facebook," the spokesperson said.

Protesters have gathered in state capitals around the country in recent days to push back against their governments' decisions to close non-essential businesses and requiring residents to largely isolate at home as the nationwide death toll from the coronavirus outbreak approaches 40,000.

Those protests have been fueled in part by President Donald Trump, who has wavered between urging governors to reopen their economies and deferring to state leaders to make such calls. In a series of tweets last week, Trump issued a call to "liberate" Michigan, Virginia and Minnesota.

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