

ACLU Files Complaint Regarding Facebook's Discriminatory Advertisements

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The American Civil Liberties Union recently filed a complaint against Facebook, claiming that many of the employment advertisements displayed on the popular social media website were discriminatory. Specifically, the advertisements centered on Facebook's strategic targeting of individuals that identified as male and implicitly discriminating against women and those that are non-binary.

The United States has a long history of employment discrimination, which has primarily affected those from underrepresented and marginalized communities. This form of discrimination is still ever present today, as many people of color and women suffer from [explicitly discriminatory hiring practices](#) based upon phenotypic appearance and even their legal name. These practices continue to contribute to the lack of diversity in professions of many fields and, subsequently, maintain the status quo of male dominance.

Despite ultimately being an issue of fairness, as established by the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), employment discrimination effectively creates [economic ramifications](#). One primary consequence is the lack of economic efficiency. Businesses that participate in discriminatory hiring practices can suffer economic loss by self-restricting their hiring pools and failing to seek the most qualified candidates. Due to these businesses' discriminatory preferences, they hire individuals that may be less qualified and, thus, provide compensation for subpar labor.

Ultimately, access to employment and the right to exchange one's labor for wages are essential components of capitalism. Wages can motivate individuals to pursue the American dream of homeownership and create intergenerational wealth. This capitalistic society is inherently unequal when a singular group reaps these benefits while it actively excludes others. Such behavior contributes to the present wealth gap, and this gap will cease to close if opportunities are not made readily available to everyone.

Alternatively, the use of advertisements through Facebook does not have to be entirely negative; whereas, advertisements could be used to create access to career fields for groups that would otherwise be underrepresented. In a practical sense, this method can be used to recruit groups that lack representation in such fields but can contribute to an expansive and competitive pool of candidates. Rather than using advertisements to aid in discrimination methods, businesses could use these ads as a tool to pursue equity and remedy the lack of diversity in many career fields.

As we continue to navigate through the digital age and as businesses progressively use social media for their daily business practices, explicit biases in the hiring process will continue to



manifest in creative ways. In order to successfully combat these biases, business and social media outlets alike must actively evaluate their hiring practices and understand how they are complicit in upholding injustices. Rather than perpetuating inequity, Facebook could enforce stricter regulations upon its employment advertisements to change the status quo.