



## WIG Webinar

March 22, 2021

“#SheLeads: Online Safety for Women Legislatures”

### Featuring:

Alaska State Representative Geran Tarr, WIG Board of Directors

Florida State Representative Marie Woodson

Massachusetts State Representative Hannah Kane

Cindy Southworth, Head of Women's Safety, *Facebook*

Jannelle Watson, Politics and Government Outreach, *Facebook*

**Lucy Gettman:** Welcome, everyone, to the first full day of spring and welcome to Women In Government's Policy Roundtable entitled “#SheLeads Online Safety for Women Legislators.” Women In Government is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization by and for women state legislators, which makes today's topic of online safety in social media very timely.

I'm Lucy Gettman, Executive Director Women In Government and I'm honored to introduce our moderator today- Alaska State Representative, Geran Tarr, who is also Treasurer of the Board of Women In Government. Thank you, and welcome, Representative Tarr.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you Lucy and welcome, everyone, on behalf of the WIG board of director. We are very excited to have you join us here is our [entire board](#) from across the country. Women In Government has provided leadership opportunities, networking, and policy resources for women state legislators, for more than 30 years, so if this is your first time joining us, I hope it won't be your last.

And some housekeeping items- we are so delighted to have so many of you join us today, and you can see the items here on the screen. All participants are muted through the system, you'll have the Q and A at the end, and so please use the chat box for that, and what we would ask is if you would take a moment right now and introduce yourselves in the chat box. And if folks aren't an expert at Zoom at this moment, let me just remind you to use the chat, select in the toolbar “To Everyone” in the drop-down menu so we can all read your message. And then, if you have any questions or comments during this again, please, please use the chat box, but we would love if people would introduce themselves, so we can get to know each other a little bit throughout the hour together today.

One thing that Women In Government is really good at is our social media presence, and we've done a great job this year transitioning to the digital environment to make sure our great programming still happens, so please keep in touch with us. Here are all of the ways that you can find us on [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) and all of the other options and then please, if you do follow us, we'd ask that you share our items too.



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This week, and you'll notice that we're using some of the hashtags for the Women's History Month, so WIG celebrates #WHM - that's a hashtag for Women's History Month - and #ConnectingLegislativeLeaders and then for today's event specifically the hashtag #SheLeads. We are incredibly grateful to the many, many sponsors that we have and the dedicated volunteers of our Business Council, the Associate Members also, and we can't thank them enough for their support of our programming and helping us transition into online programming this year.

I'm really excited now to transition and get to tell you about our featured speakers here today, and the entire bio will go into the chat so you can read that there a little bit more. This past year has presented us all with great challenges and opportunities. Communicating virtually has given policymakers more options to connect directly with our constituents. However, this has also resulted in more harassment online and direct threats to safety and security, particularly to women. I'm happy to be given the opportunity to have this discussion with fellow legislators and industry experts, so, if you would please join me, we're going to welcome our speakers now.

I would like to first welcome Janelle Watson, Facebook's Politics and Government Outreach Manager for - pardon me, Politics and Government Outreach Manager, Local and State. Hi Janelle.

**Janelle Watson:** Hello, and thank you, Representative Tarr, and hello everyone. On behalf of Facebook, we're really excited to be here with you all today partnering with Women In Government as we celebrate Women's History Month but also celebrating women across the U.S. and all of their diverse perspectives and especially legislators that we have on this call today and for those of you that are tuning in and joining and staff who are really creating meaningful changes within their communities and their respective fields. And with that, we're really excited to be talking to you all today about new resources and guides we have with you all because we know this is an important topic, and it is for us here at Facebook. So again, thank you for having us.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you so much, Janelle. Pleased that you could be here! And now I'd like to introduce our featured speakers. We have Massachusetts Representative Hannah Kane, Florida Representative Marie Woodson and Cindy Southworth, Head of Women's Safety at Facebook. Again, check out the chat box to read their full biographies.

And so, what I get to do now is transition us into some questions, and we get to hear from these great speakers. So, my first question is going to be for Representative Kane and Representative Woodson. And the question is, what is your experience with using social media,



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and how has that changed this past year to help you remain in contact with your constituents? Representative Kane, let's start with you.

**Representative Hannah Kane:** Thank you Representative Tarr, and it's so great to be here with all of you today to have this important discussion, and thanks to WIG for always hosting such timely and impactful forums for us. So, I think actually one of the last events I was at, I had the benefit of hearing Jannelle speak about Facebook and how to better use it, and so, I'm not sure if I have made her proud or not, but I do know that during this pandemic, you know, for me, the biggest challenge was the immediacy of having to relay information. So, almost as soon as we were trying to understand things and digest them ourselves, we were needing to communicate it out, and I also found it to be very text heavy. I found it challenging to always be thinking about how to put some sort of visual there that might attract attention to what it is that I was posting about, and sometimes what we needed to convey was really lengthy. There wasn't a really easy way to shortcut the information without leaving out something very important. So, I think you know, the challenge was to really grab people's attention, let them know that you have something important to convey and then to do so in a manner in which they will likely pay attention to it. Sometimes I know that worked, sometimes I know it didn't because I would get emails and questions through the chat asking me things that I had already posted about.

So, you know, I think, too, the other issue is that for me if I post something that's almost trivial or funny, I can get so many likes instantly. When I post something that is incredibly meaningful and impactful to your life, I find it more challenging to get people to read it. So I'm always trying to find a way to intersperse into my Facebook page things that I think will just keep people invested in wanting to see what I'm up to, so not necessarily the most informative but something that lets them know I'm out here doing the job for them. And I would say, finally, where we were not able to be out in public and to have events, you know, all of those great pictures of being out with constituents and celebrating the openings of businesses or an Eagle Scout. All of that went by the wayside, and so again, just from a visual perspective, that opportunity to visually convey information to people through Facebook was just really challenging for me the last couple - well, let's see - 12 months now.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you, Representative Kane. You probably couldn't see, but I was nodding my head at so many of the things that you were just saying. And Representative Woodson, we'd love to hear from you.

**Representative Marie Woodson:** Thank you so much, Representative Tarr. It's a pleasure for me to meet you this afternoon, and I would like to thank all the women of WIG. What an amazing group of women working to make the world a better place for women and families, because when we touch women, we impact the entire families. I, like you mentioned, I'm Marie Woodson. I proudly represent district 101 in South Broward in Florida. I know Lindsey is from



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South Broward, so I would like to send a shout out to her and Lucy because we had a very good conversation about women recently, and they really let me know exactly the great work that the WIG is doing in order to uplift our women. So I'm grateful and thankful to be using this platform, and it's such an important month for us to discuss the importance of social media in our lives really because social media is here to stay, and, as we can see, as women who - as a person who was running for office, social media has really impacted my life in so many ways, greatly help us to get our message across.

One thing that I learned by women, sometimes when we do something, we put 150% in it. Therefore, sometimes I did not have time to post certain important things that I needed to post. So, I got myself a young person - actually he was 16, and now he's 18. He started with me as a volunteer, and this young man is very bright, very smart, and he really helped me. And I want to say that to let you know how much it is important for us to uplift the young men and young women coming up, because they are our future, but they have so much to offer, to contribute, and when it comes to social media, they are the gurus at it. And I wanted to meet Janelle, actually, because I keep hearing that she is the best at social media.

What social media has helped me to do during my campaign, at a time where we really needed to get our message out there, bearing in mind that we've been dealing with a pandemic, so we had to find creative ways to get our message across. So, I was able to post a lot of educational messages to the constituents of my district and to everybody else because as a candidate, you don't want to reach just the people who live in your district. You want to reach people throughout the United States or throughout the world because some of those same people will be able to invest in your campaign. You'd be surprised how many people you can reach that - people who don't even know you who believe in the message that you are spreading, and then they want to donate to your campaign.

So, I would say about - one thing about me I'm very particular about things that I post on social media. A lot of people post wherever they go - if they go to Starbucks or they go here, they go there, they post it, but I think I have used social media to impact, to educate people, to empower people as well, to make sure that we are keeping in touch with items that we need to keep in touch with. As the world is moving, we need to be more savvy and using those means to communicate to the people, so social media has been very helpful to me, but one thing that I always bear in mind the same way that it's helpful, it can also hurt you by putting too much information out. Some of this information can be very damaging, so you have to be very selective in things that you post in social media. So, I look forward to continuing this conversation with you. So, let's get it going so we can really talk to the people who are looking at us. Thank you so much for having me.



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**Representative Geran Tarr:** Well, thank you so much, Representative Woodson. Again, I was nodding my head. I can't see others. I wonder if they were too. I bet a lot of shared experiences on the legislator side of things. So, now we get to hear from Cindy. And Cindy, I'm just hoping that you can tell us a little bit more about yourself and the work that you do with women leaders and your role at Facebook - so the sort of other side of this equation.

**Cindy Southworth:** Absolutely. Thank you so much, Representative Tarr, and for my fabulous, esteemed colleagues on the panel. Just a bit personally - it's now been over a year that I've been working from home, and, like all of you, it's pretty isolating. I live alone, and so I found myself using Facebook more and more as Covid started because it was a way for me to stay connected to my family and loved ones and friends, not only around the U.S., but I have family outside of the U.S., too, and it makes such a difference.

Just a bit about my background - for the past 27 years I worked in the nonprofit sector working to end gender-based violence, domestic violence and sexual assault and I had the privilege of actually testifying in the state legislatures of Maine and Pennsylvania - typically bills sponsored by women in government on domestic violence, resources, protections, protection order amendments, you name it - and so I have so much respect for women in government at every level of society. In my current job I was hired last summer to be Facebook's new Head of Women's Safety, and I am so privileged to really be sort of a central hub of teams all over the company that are working to address women's safety, whether it be engineers working to improve our proactive detection, which is our machine learning that can find bullying and harassment and hate speech before anyone sees that or even reports it.

I also get to work with nonprofit stakeholders like Women for Election in Ireland, and they're working to get women candidates elected. So, my position has a really big remit, and I love that part of it because I get to work with external stakeholders like you all. And it is vital, I absolutely believe that Facebook has to be a safe place for women, and it has to be a safe place for women because we need your voices. We need your policymaker voices, we need your community leader voices, we need to hear from survivors of abuse and have them feel empowered and safe to be online. So, I work across the company to make sure we're harnessing all of our resources and hearing from all of you when we're failing, when we have gaps, and when we can improve. So, I very much appreciate all of your feedback. And I just wanted to make a note that for 18 years I worked at the National Network to End Domestic Violence in Washington DC, and our constituency was - or were - the State Domestic Violence Coalition's and I know many of you work with them. You champion bills that impact survivors in your state, so I just wanted to thank you for the work that you all do, not only on the panel, but those attending.



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**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you, Cindy. What a great background for the role that you have and really understanding issues that affect women’s safety! I think those are just issues that we're all dealing with right now. I don't think I’m alone in having that experience of feeling like my safety was threatened online and experiencing bullying and harassment. In my notes it says to share a story and I’m thinking, “Do I want to share a story?” No, I don't want to because it's unpleasant, but I don't think I’m alone in just the negative comments and definitely the comments that seem like they're more negative or more aggressive because they're being said to a woman, perhaps wouldn't have been said in the same way if they've been said to a male colleague.

So, I guess my next question now, going back to the legislators, is thinking about our personal experiences. For Representative Woodson and Representative Kane, how do you as legislators deal with the negative attention on social media? For instance, have you had to develop an office policy on how to manage or handle issues on your social media? And we can start - flip the order and go with Representative Woodson first this time.

**Representative Marie Woodson:** Thank you, Representative Tarr, for this question. It’s a very, very important question when it comes to the negative effects that social media has on us when people are commenting or sending us negative comments and feedback. I have to say that I’ve been very fortunate in getting mostly good comments as opposed to negative comments, which we know is not the norm, especially when you are either a candidate or you are also a legislator that I’m currently now.

I have to say, when it first happened to me it was heartbreaking. I’m like, “Did they understand what I’m trying to say, or what I’m trying to do?” You know you take it a little personal at first, but hey, I have thick skin. I’m a woman, first of all, you know, things are going to be thrown at you differently than it's being thrown at men. That happens all the time to us as women. So, I learned how to take it, because not everybody's the same. Not all of us see things the same way, so you're going to have some people who see things differently and are going to throw rocks at you. So, not only did I learn how to grow thick skin, but I also developed some policies in how to respond to them because it's not everything that someone says in a negative way that you are going to respond. Or sometimes, I have to pick my battles. I have to see if it's something that needs to be responded to, and if it doesn't need to be responded to, I just ignore it. But if it does, I find a very – I would say a very diplomatic way of responding to it. But it's how you are approaching it, how you are communicating whatever you're trying to - the receiver to get, but most importantly, develop a policy in your office how to respond to those comments. It’s very critical.

Yes, I have to find ways because sometimes stuff might get a little heated. Just like I mentioned to you, the young man that was helping me also helps with social media because it's so much



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on your plate sometimes you don't have time to post everything or to take a picture where you then post it. So, he - sometimes stuff can get very emotional in the way that they respond to those comments. So, I had to put limitations on things that we need to respond to - how we need to respond to those, how we need to handle them and some of them I would respond to myself because some of those comments could be pretty horrific, and also, they could have a very negative impact on yourself, on your psyche, and on your family. Because I have children, I have a daughter and a son, and if they see something negative that they post about mom, you know that they not going to take it well. And I have to let them know “Do not respond. Let mom fight this battle.” So, it's a lot of things that you have to do, especially when you are there as a politician, as a woman. It's being thrown at you from all corners. So yes, it depends on how we handle these matters, and it's good to have policies in place on how to respond to them.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you so much, Representative Woodson. Representative Kane, have you had to develop a policy, or how have you dealt with the negativity online?

**Representative Hannah Kane:** Sure, thank you, and I think that Representative Woodson articulated a lot of what I've experienced as well. I joke that I don't actually need an office policy - I need a family policy, which is “You do not respond” policy. Because, again, as Representative Woodson said, I have two daughters in college and a son in high school, and they're very aware. They're on Facebook themselves, and so they see if somebody posts something and they get very upset about it, because at the end of the day, what they see is their mom working and caring about what she does, and the person who's responding - it's harder for them to understand the place that they might be coming from. So, sometimes it's just a point of clarifying that this person is really upset because they either are unemployed, and they can't get their unemployment benefit paid, they just - their small business just went under, or they just lost a loved one, or they couldn't get to them in a hospital or long-term care. So, some of it was easy to explain on why somebody might be having a very difficult time.

Other times, I find there are people who are just in there for the sport of it. They just want to have somebody to spar with, and in those cases, I never respond to that person there. Every once in a while, if I think that there's a grain of something there, but they're not handling it well, I will send them a private message just saying “I'm very happy to talk to you about this. Why don't you give me your cell phone or email, and let's connect that way rather than doing it over Facebook?” Because I think, again, if that person has a particular issue, I'm happy to address it, but I don't think that needs to be done over social media. I think that's best done one on one.

I also find sometimes that the most negative comments that I've ever seen are from people that don't live in my district, and most of them don't even live in the state. In fact, I'd wanted to engage them and say, “How you see my stuff and respond when I can't get anyone in my



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district to respond?” How is it that that happens? But, you know, there have been instances where somebody has posted something just incredibly flagrant, and I will delete that comment because I don't think it's fair to have that out there as indicative of what's going on in our state or my district. But I do that very far and few between. For the most part, I believe that if somebody posts something on there, and as long as it isn't offensive, that it should stay there, and that is their opinion, and I have opened myself up as an elected official with a Facebook page that's public and with comments on, so I should expect that.

I also think that, you know, when somebody has an actual question or is seeking clarity on something, and if I think that that clarity is beneficial for all, I will answer that on my state webpage. If I think that somebody just looking for a philosophical battle and that it's just not going to end well or it's simply the sport of having that conversation back and forth, again I either ask them personally to find a way to connect one on one, or I just don't engage with it. I have both a personal Facebook page and a State Rep Facebook page, and I try as much as possible to keep them distinct, although I think that my constituents knowing who I am as a person is important as well. So, sometimes I will put more personal pieces of information out on my State Rep page. For the most part I've been really lucky. I have had a pretty respectful response in the six years that I've had my State Rep page six years as an elected, and, you know, several months before that, when I was running. I think part of that is because I don't get into the sparring, I set that – that was a policy I decided from day one that this was not going to be something that I was also going to spend a ton of time on because I think you can easily get sucked down a rabbit hole of time when you're literally only having one person who's engaging in that. I think about myself and how can I maximize my time to help the maximum number of people, and so, if I just think it's a one on one back and forth, that's not a way that I'm going to use my limited amount of time to help the constituents in my district.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you, Representative Kane. I really appreciate both the Representatives' comments, and you know, I'm nodding my head looking in the chat. Other people are commenting. So, I think it's somewhat universal that we've all had to address this a little bit, think of a policy, or how we're going to handle it on our end of things. So, Cindy, now the question for you - my policy, let me contrast this - my policy is, you know do the cathartic response, but you don't hit send right? So, that's one policy, but what about on your end from Facebook? What tools has Facebook developed to prevent online harassment, bullying, or abusive women on its platforms, including younger women teenagers and minors?

**Cindy Southworth:** Thank you so much, Representative Tarr. I love your cathartic approach. I might have done something similar in my past life at the nonprofit when we got some pretty ugly comments from people that were supporting domestic violence offenders.



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So, I'm going to jump in and talk about tools. In fact, Janelle Watson, my fabulous colleague, just posted a couple of links, but before I do, I want to say that we have a responsibility as a company, as Facebook and our family of apps, including Instagram and WhatsApp. We have to develop every tool and feature that we can to allow our users to control their experience on our platform, so they control what they see, how people interact, what's happening, but concurrently, at the same time, we also have to work, and I'm so proud that we are working with nonprofits, not only in the United States but abroad, so we can change the culture. Because otherwise, it's unfortunately a game of whack-a-mole. Every time we come up with a new way to protect our users from predators and offenders and trolls - I hate the word trolls because they're cute and fun on movies - and what's happening is blatant sexism and misogyny and ugly hatred and racism. This is not cute and fuzzy. And so, we are working with our nonprofit partners to figure out how we use social media to help change gender norms. How do we change that toxic culture, so that someday our children and our children's children grow up and think this is a thing of the past? They're stunned that people ever interacted with each other in this way. So, that's the world that I'm trying to build.

At the same time, we have to keep building those tools and Janelle posted two guides that I really love. One is called [#SheLeads](#) and it's all sorts of Facebook tools - not only for you, but I definitely encourage you to share with your staff - sometimes your staff is your family, but you should also share this with whoever is helping you manage your page on Instagram and your Facebook page. There are great tools that you can use. There's also an [Instagram Guide for Women in Politics](#). Some of my favorite features are the profanity filter and keyword filter. You can put in a list of words that you never want to see in comments on your page, and I strongly recommend that you use those features. That way, that discourse never happens on your page. Those comments are hidden because you've made a stance that this is the sort of level of discourse that you want as a woman in government on your Facebook or your Instagram page. You get to set that tone. There's also features like hide comments, and you can pin comments. You can get them towards the top. So, there's all different ways. You definitely want [page admins](#) so that this is not all falling to you while you're trying to introduce bills and race between committee meetings. You don't have time to be managing this. So, if you can have staff - sometimes I know in Virginia our state legislators have one staff person, so there's going to one person wearing a lot of hats, but if you can, have somebody else as your page admin or have a couple of page admins so that they can help do all of that page management behind the scenes while you're doing important business. So, basically, we have a responsibility, and we are constantly creating new tools. That's one of my favorite parts of my job is getting to work with the engineers, and I'm testing things that I can't wait to announce when they can become public. So, stay tuned, and we will keep sharing with you as every new feature comes out. We'll make sure Janelle will send them to you so you can add that to your arsenal of how you fight hatred on the platform and off the platform.



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**Representative Geran Tarr:** Wow, thank you! And I’m just noticing Janelle did put the two links in the chat. So, the one is the Instagram Safety Guide for Women in Politics, and then the other is #SheLeads Online Safety Guide for Women Legislators on Facebook. Cindy, will some of those mentions - for example, the keywords and the hidden words - will those guides take women legislators through the process of how they can use those themselves?

**Cindy Southworth:** Exactly, and it's step by step. So, in the #SheLeads guide there's bullying and prevention tools, on page eight, safety tips for page admins on page nine. It's just like boom – boom – boom, exactly what you can do, and so you don't have to overthink it. Just go to the guide and go to the page and then just pull up your settings and go to town.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** That’s so awesome! I didn't know that, and I’m so excited to learn that and play around with that. We have another question - how can we have an auto response in messenger that tells people they can reach us at our public emails? Does that exist?

**Cindy Southworth:** Janelle, do you want to take that one?

**Janelle Watson:** So, we do actually have auto replies and instant replies that we all can help you set up. So that way, if someone does reach out, especially if you're getting the same question over and over again, you can direct them to a public website, a phone number or if there's an email that you want your constituents to reach out to you. After this presentation, you all have will access to the state level contacts on Facebook, so you can have your state point of contact help you set that up.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Very exciting! Thank you so much, Janelle. Okay, I’m going to continue on here, and we're going to go back to some questions for our legislator panelists. Do you notice differences in how men and women engage on social media? I’ve been wanting to get to this question. What are some inclusive social media practices you have adopted to target outreach to multiple groups in your communities? Representative Kane, let's start with you.

**Massachusetts State Representative Hannah Kane:** I definitely think - and this is a generalization - but that women largely are on Facebook, particularly if they're coming to me a State Rep, to either seek relevant information for an issue that they have, a problem they're trying to solve, or to share with me their experience so that I can have that understanding when I’m dealing with issues. Men, for the most part, come for the discourse piece of it. Sometimes they will be supportive of something that's posted there, but a lot of times more I’m getting feedback and pointing out why somebody doesn't agree with something typically. Again, that's a generalization, and it depends on what the topic is.



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Some things certainly have been much more – I would say radioactive the last year - and I think that has also shown a little bit of a different response. Typically beforehand, sometimes if I would post about a bill that maybe somebody didn't agree with, I might get some comments, but I think the visceral reactions that have happened this year is, again, largely because we are dealing with such an incredibly difficult situation with so many different factors involved. I remind myself every day of that, you know, whether I'm dealing with somebody on Facebook or an email or a phone call, that it's just a challenging time. I have found that a lot of my women colleagues, female colleagues, do more of their own posting as opposed to a lot of my men colleagues tend to have somebody who does it for them. That's not all the time, but I would say that it seems as women that we might be more comfortable using this medium and that some of my male colleagues like appreciate having somebody else take a look at what it is that they might be looking to post.

And you know, again, I think that, from a targeting outreach perspective, I've tried a couple things. I would say pre-pandemic, visuals were another really good way to sort of give an indication to how to reach different groups within your district. Again, during this period of time where everything has been so text heavy, I've tried to do sort of call outs or headlines or something that would also indicate where something might be of a particular interest to one group of people versus another. I think it's probably been very challenging, and I'm not sure if you asked my constituents if they ever felt like they were targeted for outreach, I think that they would probably think it's been a more generic response this year, and not necessarily in the negative way, but just this wanting to convey information as we had it as quickly and as efficiently as we could to all constituent members.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you, Representative Kane. Representative Woodson, I'll repeat it- do you notice differences in how men and women engage on social media? What are some inclusive social media practices you have adopted to target outreach to multiple groups in your communities?

**Representative Marie Woodson:** Thank you, thank you very much for this question. Definitely, definitely, there's definitely a difference between how men and women also engage in social media. Representative Kane explained it very well, actually. She covered some of the things that I wanted to mention. But women, we usually post about issues that are interest to all of us, including families, including men, including everybody else. Men tend to focus on issues that are more pertinent to men. Usually what I noticed, as women, we get more backlash on things that we post as opposed to if a man would have been the one posting it. So, yes, there's gender bias when it comes to posting how people would respond to a woman as opposed to the way they would respond to a man posting the same thing or saying the same thing.



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One thing that I learned - I try not to focus on that as long as, you know, whatever our post is going to help someone or is going to educate someone. We'll even start a conversation about topics that people do not want to cover. So, I would definitely post it, and whatever the comments are, the feedback, I try to deal with them and respond to the one that I need to respond. But when it comes to being inclusive, some of the inclusive things that I do, I have a district that is very diverse. I don't want to be redundant, so I didn't want to stay on this subject too long when it comes to men and women. But I want to talk about some of the things that I do in order to make sure that I'm reaching multiple groups on social media.

I have a district that is very diverse. I'm in South Florida, Broward County, where you have Black, White, Hispanic, so a lot of Caribbean and so forth and so on. So, what I try to do when I post something, sometimes, I try to put it in three different languages in order to make sure that I'm reaching people, that I'm giving them the information that they need to get. And even some of the mail - I have a newsletter that I send out. Sometimes I try to cover - even if I don't translate the entire document, but I make sure that I included all those languages to make sure that everybody understands what's going on, get the information that they need to get, especially doing COVID where people need to know “What's going on here?” “Where's the vaccination site?” “Where is the testing site?” Or “Where can I get food for my family?” All those types of issues that are critical or important to our families. So, I'm very cognizant of that. Some people just don't speak the language or just don't understand what's going on. And we are our brothers' keepers, our sisters' keepers, so I want to make sure that I do that. But when it comes, like I said, to men and women, it's a big difference, and we have to try to find ways to dispel certain myths that are there when it comes to our women. So, thank you.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you, Representative Woodson. I love that you do the multiple languages. I tried to do that myself because of the district I represent being very diverse. Cindy, as we go back to you, I'm just wondering if you could comment on any resources that Facebook has for inclusiveness. And I'm unaware, so I don't know if there's anybody who heard those comments - I'm thinking maybe others are thinking, “Hey, I should try and do that. And does Facebook have any way to help me with that, with language translation?” And then also thinking you know more about the topic of women's safety, you've mentioned a couple of the things that Facebook is working on. How are you developing those new platforms or new policies? Is it in conversations with women and elected officials? How do you approach inclusiveness and making sure many voices are at the table?

**Cindy Southworth:** Thank you so much. I'm going to start, and then I'm going to pass it to Janelle to wrap up and add whatever I miss because she's been with the company longer.

One of the things around inclusion that I want to talk about is that, just the safety policy team - so that's my team, and we address children's safety, women's safety, LGBTQ+ safety, health and



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well-being, and suicide prevention - so, that's just one team at Facebook - we work with over 400 safety organizations around the world, and half of those are women's safety organizations, but that doesn't include other teams that work very closely with the civil rights and racial justice community, with all sorts of other organizations. We have regional leads around the world. Our U.S. team like Jannelle can talk about outreach work that we do within the U.S. But the point is that we take Diversity and Inclusion very seriously. We know that we have to have policies, tools, and protocols and features that support all of our users, not only in the U.S. and all of our very diverse communities throughout the U.S., but also across the world. And so, one of those things happens is when we do a policy change, when we're working on enhancing our content policies, we will actually put together an external engagement plan and make sure that we are doing individual outreach to nonprofit groups such as women policymakers, women civic organizations, NGOs, human rights groups, all sorts of groups to make sure we're getting all the input possible before we make a decision or a change. And then we publish that policy change on our community standards website. You can see where we've made enhancements in the recent past. Whenever you look at our community standards, you'll see the changes. So, we're very transparent about those.

In terms of language, one of the things that I love - because I have family and friends and nonprofit friends from all over the world - because my default language is English, when I'm reading a post in Portuguese or Spanish, or even Chinese, it will automatically offer to translate the post for me if I would like it translated. And I love that feature because it means that I can follow along and like and add all the hearts and those types of things when my friends are posting in other languages without them having to explain it to me. And I don't have to go copy and paste it and over to a translation website. So, Jannelle, do you want to talk about any other features around Inclusion?

**Jannelle Watson:** Yeah, I think accessibility is really huge. One of the things that we rolled out, actually, a few months ago, is in order - we realize when people come to our platforms, specifically Facebook, that they do so with the sound turned off. Because of that, it's really important that you do have accessible content, so we actually have automatic live captions that we've rolled out on the platform for you all, especially if you will be engaging and Facebook Lives. [You can actually turn that feature](#) or your staff can turn it on. So that way, when someone comes to your content, they're not missing out on it, and you're also hitting a key audience that wants to engage with your content by making sure that you are leveraging captions as much as you can. And this should be happening in the regular video as well. And we can also share that guide with you, if you want to know how do you turn this on, but I think that's definitely something that we improved a lot and continue to work on our accessibility tools to make sure that you all are able to leverage them as well.



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**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you! I am loving learning all these new things that I get to try today here. We do have a question that came in the chat- what other ideas do you have for making the information and methods for delivering it more inclusive? So, I know you've kind of covered that, but it was in the chat, so I just wanted to prompt you if there's another idea that you're not currently doing at Facebook, but you would like to do or think should be done - if you wanted to share that.

**Jannelle Watson:** Yeah, another thing that we actually saw people use more of in 2020 was actually pinning posts. And that's because when someone goes to your page, you don't want them to have to go and scroll post through post to get that key information that they need, whether it's time sensitive, urgent, or just a key resource that you want them to know is available. So, that's another way to make sure that when anyone comes to your page, they're not missing out on key information that you want them to have. And what a pin post does is basically just like a regular post, but it's pinned to the top of your page. That way whenever I go to your page, it's going to be the first thing I see. So, any key information in there that you want to make sure it's accessible to everyone, I would put it in there, and we have that same feature available on Instagram as well where you can actually pin a comment. So, all tools that I would highly encourage you to use if you're not using them yet.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you so much, Jannelle. Those are all really helpful. I'm imagining everyone is having that reaction that's hearing these great suggestions from all of you. It's an exciting time in our conversation because now we want to turn it over to the participants and ask all of you to join the conversation. So, if you haven't submitted a question yet, please write them in the chat box in the toolbar. Again, if you'll use the selection “To everyone” so that will see your questions coming in, we would love to make sure we can get your questions answered today. While we're waiting for some questions to come in, I'd like to take a second and ask all the panelists how allies can support women's safety on social media platforms. Cindy, let's start with you to talk about what Facebook and Instagram are doing to ensure this as an inclusive effort- we've kind of gone over that, but if there's anything else about allies that you want to share with us.

**Cindy Southworth:** I would love to. I already talked about the tools and features we're doing as Facebook, but one of the things that I've really enjoyed in some of my trainings of women policymakers is we've been partnering, especially in Europe, with a nonprofit called [#IAmHere](#), and it's a group that specializes in counter speech and not the traditional way where somebody just goes toe to toe with somebody who's doing ugly commenting. Instead, they basically, engage their volunteer corps by using a hashtag #IAmHere and then, because there are followers that are following that hashtag. What happens is say you're trying to have a really complicated conversation about COVID in your community, and somebody is just posting and random things that are distracting, but you really don't want to block or delete because you're



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an elected official, you can, with #IamHere, what they do is they will pile on and like and comment and react to the most thoughtful comments under your post, which then because of the algorithms move that comment up. And it gets more love that's then seen, or you can even pin a comment, but beyond that, your followers can do this organically. If you've got core volunteers that you work with on a regular basis that really support your role in government, they can chime in and like or comment onto something substantive so that it drowns out some of the white noise of people just not wanting to be respectful in a social media space. So, it does not at all take away from our responsibility as a company to make sure we're developing all the tools using machine learning and figure out how we're actually working on figuring out how we can hide some of those comments more effectively that we think might be harmful and then give you a chance to weigh in, but at the same time there's lots of things that community can do to really bring the discourse up a level.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you so much. I'm just looking to the chat here. Can you give us the link for #IamHere information? Is that something that can be shared? Wonderful. And then Jannelle is so awesome she's shared another link with us about [how to add the captions](#) for your videos on Facebook. Thank you so much, Jannelle.

And we have a comment here from Wendy. Facebook Live has been a great resource during the pandemic. I'm interested in hearing from some of the legislators whether they intend to continue to use Facebook Live for their events and their town halls in addition to in person. So, I don't know if people want to chime in on the chat and I can try to share some of the answers. Or if we can try to recognize some folks, I think we could maybe call them out, possibly, if anyone wants to share.

What I can say is I had a very powerful experience with an event that I do every year, a restorative justice summit, so, not a town hall exactly like a constituent meeting. But it was our fifth year doing it, and Alaska is a huge state, and if you can picture way out in the Aleutian Islands in the one of the farthest away places. At the end of this event, we had a gentleman say that he had been wanting to come for the last five years but could never get the funds through his school district to attend this event, and because it was virtual this year, he was able to attend. And that really struck me as, you know, a reminder of how to be more inclusive, how to make sure that we get as many people to attend our events, I think a lot of working parents and transportation being a challenge - and so I'm thinking of trying to continue to use the Facebook Live in addition to the in person and that way, hopefully accommodate the most people. But I'm just trying to get us started with answers and see what else comes in the chat. So, Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier- Facebook Live when I'm on site somewhere have been really well received, and I don't know if we can allow Tricia to share any more if that's - if she would like to.



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**Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier:** Hi everybody. I am joining you from the Berkshires in Western Massachusetts. So, just an example is that I went to the vaccination site that was at our community college and just so that people could see what it was going to look like when they got there because there's so much anxiety about “How long do I have to wait?” and “Is there a big long line of traffic?” and “What are those policemen doing there?” And being able to have actually people be able to see and where were they were going to park and that was just super helpful to people. And it got shared several thousand times, and people are just really appreciative of information right now, just like Rep. Kane was saying. That's what people are hungry for.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you. That's a great idea, and it's something I always mean to do and forget to do, so good for you for getting it done.

**Representative Hannah Kane:** I saw that that Rep. Farley-Bouvier put up and she's done a couple that have been really, again, like she said, they spread, and they've been tweeted and retweeted and on Facebook they've been shared, so it is really valuable. And I think part of that is knowing how long to make it and how precise to make it. I think she does a great job at that. It's certainly something I've learned from her.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you Representative Kane. Representative Woodson wanted to share.

**Representative Marie Woodson:** Yes, actually, I just wanted to add to what the person who just came before - the Representative - mentioned. I was doing two vaccination drives, and we had vaccines that were left for people who registered but did not show up. We put it on Facebook Live, and all those vaccines were used. We were going to send them back, and we want to get as many people vaccinated, as many people as possible, so Facebook Live is the tool if you want people to get instant information or if you want to send a message out that you want people to see. And it did some good on that day, and we were so happy over the fact that so many people find out about it through Facebook Live and can get the vaccine. So, we are keeping it on Facebook Live every time we do something in order to make sure that we get our community vaccinated. So, I just wanted to add that to it.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you Representative Woodson. I'm imagining the Facebook staff love hearing that, knowing that this platform is helping people stay healthy. That's an amazing way to use social media, right? We have a couple more minutes for questions. I'm not seeing a new one yet in the chat. If I've missed it, I'll keep looking, but please do share in the chat if you have a question you'd like to ask. And I guess I'll just turn to our Facebook panelists for resources.



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**Cindy Southworth:** I want to share one other as we're talking about COVID and Facebook. I was so proud before I joined Facebook and in the nonprofit realm. Facebook called me up and said “With COVID happening, we know there's a shadow pandemic of gender-based violence, domestic violence. Often victims are in lockdown with their abusive partners in the same space. It's really difficult for them to reach out.” And so, before I joined Facebook, I started gathering national help lines from all over the world and also helped at the National Network to End Domestic Violence. We and UN Women put together tips for people experiencing abuse and [tips for as a loved one or a family friend](#) how do you help somebody who you think is experiencing abuse, and they're all in the COVID information hub. And so, if you go to the [COVID information hub in Facebook](#), you can scroll down you'll see the tips or if you're in Facebook, and you search for domestic violence - actually, I could just drop the links in the chat. But I am so proud, and now that I came inside, I'm continuing to work on tools. Facebook engineers and designers actually built a global directory of local nonprofits and national helplines that we just announced last week. We're filling it right now with all of the records globally. But we know that everybody should be able to reach out and get help from a [domestic violence or sexual assault helpline](#) and so lila.help is being built right now. It's actually built - it's being filled I should say, and we'll announce it publicly once it has enough data in it to be helpful to survivors. So, COVID has been tough for lots of people, and so I couldn't be more proud that Facebook Lives are helping people find vaccines and also helping them find help if they're being abused.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you, and we did have one other question that had come in about the Facebook Live- how do you keep someone from bullying on a Facebook live event? So, I don't know if you have any of those other great tools you've talked about for [managing the folks](#).

**Jannelle Watson:** Yeah, so actually the page moderation tools that Cindy addressed earlier - those same filters apply to [Facebook Live](#). So, if you're using those same moderations like making sure if there's certain words you don't want appearing on your page, that still translates over to Facebook Live. So, if there's any words that you've highlighted, that will also appear, same thing if there's any users that you put on restrict - that also applies on Facebook Live as well. So, if you're not using our profanity tools, I would highly recommend that you do use those just because they do translate to some of our other tools as well.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Okay, thank you. Now we've got a couple more questions and now we're getting close to out of time, so I'm going to try and read through these and hope we can get to them all. Does using the Live feature create more algorithms with your followers?

**Jannelle Watson:** Great question. So Live is one of our most popular tools right now, and it's one of the few tools that Facebook resends a notification out to your engage fans letting them



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know that you are live. And we see that it continues to get 10 times longer views than regular video. So I say all that to say that, yes, it is a great tool to leverage, especially if you're trying to increase reach and engagement on your page.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you. Next question - how do I transport information on a personal page to another page I would like to bring live and complete?

**Jannelle Watson:** So, my team is happy to help you with that. So, after just send us an email, and we'll connect you to your regional point of contact to help you with that.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Getting it done here. I love it. Next question - is Facebook Live as effective when doing something short, say one to two minutes?

**Jannelle Watson:** Yeah, it absolutely is. It really depends on the content, and we saw this a lot during COVID where we actually had people tuning in when the governors were going live for up to 20 minutes because they wanted to know what was going on with COVID in their state. And so, it really just depends on the content. So, it could be from one minute to up to 30 minutes. It really is going to be on the audience and content.

**Cindy Southworth:** And Jannelle, we can't hesitate to mention Instagram Reels. So, it's a new feature, and if you want to do short little video clips that are catchy, especially around something you're trying to push out to your constituency, please consider Instagram Reels.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you, yet another thing I have learned today. I had not heard of that. Representative Woodson is saying, “Can Cindy conduct an in-depth training on the new features on Facebook as well? It is very hard for candidates to get ads on Facebook now. How can Facebook make it easier for candidates?” You've probably only been asked that a million times.

**Cindy Southworth:** Jannelle is already signing up to help with that. She's the expert on engagements. She actually helps you figure out how to use your platform to reach your constituency. My expertise is on the safety side of it, but we're happy to do a joint training together on all the tools. We have basically taken the #SheLeads guide and put slides together that go through all of those features, we talked about today and more. We would love to do that with candidates. We want all the candidates to be able to effectively use these platforms, but also know how to turn on the safety features to make sure you have a positive experience and your constituency has a positive experience.



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**Jannelle Watson:** And Representative Woodson, we do have my colleague Rachel Holland on the line that covers Florida, and she is amazing. So we'll make sure we set you up with her and she can set something up for you both on the ad side as well, if that is of interest.

**Representative Marie Woodson:** I would really appreciate that. It was very hard for me to get my ad. Even though I was ready to pay for it, I had a lot of hurdles. So, now that I know Facebook is doing a great job on everything else, but I just wanted to make sure I talk to someone to see how best can we do it because as state legislators, we have to run every two years, so now, you know, we just won our seat, and we're running again. So, I just need to know, so I can use it, you know because Facebook- I love Facebook, actually, so I just wanted to know. Thank you so much.

**Jannelle Watson:** Of course, we're happy to do that for you.

**Cindy Southworth:** I just have to do a shout out to Representative Woodson. She keeps putting her questions in the chat box like she's a regular attendee, and you've got control of the mic. You could just go off mute anytime.

**Representative Marie Woodson:** I just like to respect everybody else, that's all. Thank you.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you so much, Representative Woodson, for those great comments and for then getting the response that to know that we can do these trainings. And Jannelle, it sounds like your regional contacts and colleagues are participating, and that will be our way to connect following this event.

**Jannelle Watson:** Yes, yes.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** I'm watching her nod. Well, we're coming here to the end and so that we make sure that we end on time, I think I'll probably stop there so that we don't go over. So Jannelle's email has just been added into the chat [jannelle@fb.com](mailto:jannelle@fb.com). I'm imagining your inbox is going to have quite a few new messages today because you have both been so awesome and with sharing all of those things. So, let me just thank everyone again. This has been such a great conversation. Thank you to our audience, and I'd like to remind everyone that this presentation will be available on the Women In Government website a few days now. Just give us a little bit of time for that.

And then we're so excited to invite you to future events. So, Women In Government will be back on Wednesday April 7, at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time with Acting Chairwoman of the Federal Communications Commission, Jessica Rosenworcel, to discuss [“Connectivity, Cybersecurity and COVID-19 in K-12 Education.”](#) Don't miss out Washington State Representative and Board Chair



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Cindy Ryu moderating and participating, along with Rhode Island State Representative Barbara Ann Fenton-Fung and Christine Fox of the Consortium for School Networking. So, they'll be a discussion on the pandemic and reentry process for K-12 schools, including broadband Internet access, the homework gap, data, cybersecurity, and states' roles in supporting schools. So again, that is Wednesday April 7, at 3:00 p.m.

Women In Government will be back June 22<sup>nd</sup> with our [Summer Summit Series](#). The summit will take place June 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> and June 29<sup>th</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup>. It's a multi-day virtual conference over the summer. To find us online, again, please check out [www.womeningovernment.org](http://www.womeningovernment.org) - that's where all of the event details and registration information is.

So, again, thank you so much to our incredible panelists today - Representative Kane from Massachusetts and Representative Woodson from Florida, amazing women had so much great things to say and share. And to Cindy Southworth and Jannelle Watson from Facebook, thank you, and thank you for all the work you're going to be doing in the future as all of us get in touch with you and make sure that we can do a really good job with our social media.

We do have two minutes- panelists, anyone have anything they'd like to say in closing?

**Representative Marie Woodson:** I just want to say that I really appreciate this opportunity for us women to share, to create this wonderful space where we can get so much information. I appreciate the work that WIG is doing, and I look forward to continuing working with you. Facebook, keep on providing us with this web platform in order for us to put our voice out there, especially doing this type of pandemic. Thank you so much, and let's keep the work going in order for us to uplift and empower our women. Thank you.

**Representative Geran Tarr:** Thank you, Representative Woodson. Representative Kane?

**Massachusetts State Representative Hannah Kane:** Thank you, I appreciate that, and I would just add that I think, you know, as always, I've learned something today, which I think is the hallmark of all of the WIG forums and briefings and events that we have. So, really grateful to have been a part of it, but also grateful for what I've learned and what I know that I'm not doing well yet In terms of opportunity to continue to improve.

But again, you know, it's been really helpful, and I appreciate the opportunity to be with women legislators at all times, even if it is in a virtual environment. I'm really grateful to share, and I am a Massachusetts legislator, so I think that we can cover - I'm happy to do coast to coast, but want to give a shout out to - I saw several of my colleagues in Massachusetts who were on as part of this today, and so grateful to see them.



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**Representative Geran Tarr:** So, wonderful to have everyone today. This is the slide of the [amazing team at Women In Government](#).

We hope we'll see you at our next event on April 7.

Thank you, thank you so much, Representative Woodson, Representative Kane, Jannelle and Cindy.

Have a great day, and enjoy Women's History Month!

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