

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Trump Faces Bipartisan Backlash After Racist Video Targeting Barack and Michelle Obama Posted on Truth Social

A racist, AI-generated video depicting the Obamas as apes circulated on President Trump's Truth Social account for about 12 hours before removal, drawing condemnation from civil rights groups and leaders from both parties during Black History Month.

Community Center / **Published On February 06, 2026 06:15 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **February 06, 2026**



President Donald Trump.

President Donald Trump drew swift and widespread condemnation after a racially offensive video was posted to his Truth Social account late Thursday night, depicting

former President Barack Obama and former First Lady Michelle Obama as apes in a jungle setting. The post, which appeared at 11:44 p.m. Eastern Time on February 5, remained online for roughly 12 hours before being removed following bipartisan backlash.

The clip was part of an approximately one-minute video promoting conspiracy theories related to the 2020 presidential election. In one segment, which was generated using artificial intelligence, the faces of Barack and Michelle Obama were superimposed onto cartoon apes shown in a jungle environment. The imagery was accompanied by the song "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," a pairing that civil rights advocates said echoed centuries-old racist tropes historically used to dehumanize Black people.

Civil rights organizations, including the NAACP, denounced the video as "vile and dehumanizing," with particular emphasis placed on the timing of the post during the first week of Black History Month. Critics said the imagery reinforced harmful racial stereotypes and crossed a line that demanded accountability.

Condemnation came from both sides of the political aisle. Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, the only Black Republican serving in the U.S. Senate and a known Trump ally, called the post "the most racist thing I've seen out of this White House" and publicly demanded that it be taken down. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries described the video as "unpresidential and divisive," while Republican Senator Roger Wicker was among other GOP figures who labeled the post "unacceptable."

The White House initially attempted to dismiss the criticism, with Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt characterizing the reaction as "fake outrage." Hours later, officials reversed course, attributing the post to an error by a staff member and confirming that the video had been deleted. Trump himself did not issue a direct comment on the incident. His Truth Social account, however, is known for frequent late-night posts that amplify false claims surrounding the 2020 election.

According to reporting, the video originated from a pro-Trump meme account. Critics also pointed to Trump's past controversies involving the Obamas, including his long-promoted "birther" conspiracy theories questioning Barack Obama's citizenship, viewing the post as part of a broader pattern rather than an isolated lapse.

Reaction online was immediate and intense. Users shared screenshots and clips of the video before its removal, and hashtags such as #RacistTrump trended across platforms. Political analysts noted that the incident could carry consequences as Trump seeks to appeal to a broader and more diverse electorate during his second term.

The episode also reignited calls for stronger content moderation on Truth Social, the platform Trump co-founded in 2022 after being banned from several major social media sites. Civil rights advocates urged accountability from both the president and the platform, stressing the real-world harm caused by imagery that perpetuates racial stereotypes.

By Friday afternoon, no additional statements had been issued by the White House. Attention then shifted to Trump's overall social media strategy as his administration continues to navigate other national priorities.

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