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## The Intermittent Burden of Proof Criterion and Alyssa Milano

1 message

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**Bryan White** <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>  
To: truthometer@politifact.com

Mon, May 27, 2019 at 2:38 PM

Dear Truth-O-Meter,

As you are doubtless aware, one of your stated principles consists of a "burden of proof" criterion.

Executive Director Aaron Sharockman recently described that criterion for an African audience:

If you say something, if you make a factual claim, online, on television, in the newspaper, you should be able to support it with evidence. And if you cannot or will not support that claim with evidence we say you're guilty. We'll, we'll rate that claim negatively.

Contrary to that statement of principle, PolitiFact withheld judgment on a claim Alyssa Milano (and others) made about the impact of Georgia's law limiting abortion ([May 24, 2019](#)). The summary paragraph explains that PolitiFact does not rate Milano's claim because it is not yet known whether it is true:

### Our conclusion

Milano and others are claiming that a new abortion law in Georgia states that women will be subject to prosecution. It actually doesn't say that, but that doesn't mean the opposite — that women can't be prosecuted for an abortion — is true, either. We'll have to wait and see how prosecutors and courts interpret the laws before we know which claim is accurate.

This non-ruling could hardly provide a more obvious contradiction to Sharockman's description of PolitiFact policy. [PolitiFact's statement of principles declares](#) "we rate statements based on the information known at the time the statement is made."

I implore you, Truth-O-Meter, to either apply the principles consistently or else alter the principles to allow PolitiFact to apply them consistently moving forward.

Altering the principles on a case-by-base basis should not serve as a viable option.

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Sincerely,

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editor  
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