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Dispute ("Fact Check-Termination of pregnancy can be necessary to save a woman's life, experts say")

1 message

Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>
To: reutersfactcheck@thomsonreuters.com

Sat, Jul 30, 2022 at 4:04 PM

Dear Reuters Fact Check team,

My apologies for not flagging [this item](#) for you sooner. I only recently realized how badly and broadly the mainstream media were butchering the abortion debate.

Media fact checkers, including Reuters Fact Check, have routinely equivocated on the term "abortion" in their work. The term has a number of meanings associated with it, and it is the responsibility of fact checkers to correctly identify the uses of terms in the claims they seek to fact check.

Your fact check of Alexandra DeSanctis Marr's tweet makes zero effort to contextualize her claim (no, I don't count linking her tweet as contextualization).

In context, DeSanctis Marr was addressing Supreme Court dialog featuring Justice Sotomayor. Sotomayor questioned where the life of the mother figures into the morality of abortion. DeSanctis Marr answered Sotomayor's line of argument in keeping with the "pro-life" understanding of abortion, which equates to elective abortion. Their movement, in the main, seeks to eliminate elective abortion in particular, not "abortion" broadly defined as any termination of pregnancy. The Associated Press perhaps shares part of the blame for making the modifier "elective" optional by identifying opponents of elective abortion as "anti-abortion" and not "anti-elective-abortion" and making that an AP Stylebook standard.

Ignoring the meaning of "abortion" as DeSanctis Marr used it and substituting a different definition as a counterargument counts as a [fallacy of equivocation](#). Reuters Fact Check can publish a story with the title "Fact Check-Termination of pregnancy can be necessary to save a woman's life, experts say" and there's nothing wrong with that if the term "abortion" does not shift in meaning. But your fact check presents the opinion of the doctors as contradicting DeSanctis Marr:

Contrary to claims made online, certain medical conditions may require the termination of a pregnancy to avoid fatal complications for the mother.

The sole example of "claims" made online was the tweet from DeSanctis Marr. Considering [the claim in context](#) (the trio of links should suffice for background), there is no contradiction.

Of course, if "abortion" simply means the ending of pregnancy for any reason aside from producing a live birth, feel free to correct all Thomson Reuters references to "anti-abortion" that fail to make an appropriate distinction between that definition and the position of activists who [oppose elective abortion](#).

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

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Sincerely,

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