M Gmail   **Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>**

V2: Correction/clarification request for March 23, 2022 HB 1557 article

1 message

Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>   Tue, Jul 5, 2022 at 10:46 AM
To: truthometer@politifact.com
Cc: Angie Holan <holan@politifact.com>

Note: I sent the below email at 8 a.m. this morning but did not receive the form email reply PolitiFact often uses in response. Just in case this means the attachment somehow interfered with your receipt of the email I am sending it again minus the attachment (and fixing a typo).

From: **Bryan White** <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Jul 5, 2022 at 8:00 AM
Subject:
To: <truthometer@politifact.com>

Dear Truth-O-Meter,

While reviewing some of PolitiFact's work containing the phrase "Don't Say Gay" I happened on your 'Don't say gay' vs. 'parental rights' article. That article contains some dubious reporting that may require a correction. At the least PolitiFact should clarify and modify its referenced works to make it easier for readers to follow PolitiFact's reasoning.

Here's the problem passage (not to exclude the existence of others):

> "First graders should not have woke gender ideology imposed in their curriculum, and that is what we are standing for," DeSantis said.
>
> These statements echo remarks by state Sen. Dennis Baxley, R-Ocala, the bill's Senate sponsor who said he was addressing "social engineering" that could result in more children identifying as gay or transgender.

The passage mentions "remarks" by Sen. Baxley to the effect that "social engineering" in school could lead to increased identification as gay or transgender by students.

The link leads to a video of a state senate session over four hours in length. If this story came to me as an editor, I would have the reporter do a more specific job of pinning down the source of the relevant quotation(s). Often PolitiFact will include in its reporting the relevant time for material occurring on a longer video of this type. Plainly linking to a four hour video does not ably assist the reader in retracing the fact check reporter's steps.

To me, the reporter's failure to include information pinning down the relevant material served as a red flag warning the reporter had not verified the material. It seems to me second nature to take note of where such material occurs if one had to hunt for it in a four hour video.

I spent time trying to verify what PolitiFact reported. I do not see evidence supporting the claim in your report. I've created an attachment featuring transcripts of parts of the senate session that seemed relevant to PolitiFact's claims. Here's an example:

> 3:29:06
> Sen. Rizzo
> Thank you, Madame President. Thank you for that definition, and building upon a very simple understanding of sexual orientation we have a section that prohibits instr-types of instruction or, more specifically, say what it is (?) calls out groups or individuals or, or, or a minority group of a particular class, that instruction is prohibited or precluded from being had. So, if we agree on the definition of sexual orientation, and that sexual orientation, uh, phrase on line 98, and you are precluded as a teacher from including an instruction anything having to do with sexual orientation or gender identity, is there a concern that discussion in a classroom–instruction in a classroom–instruction in a classroom will result in our K-third graders becoming gay? That's my question.

> ("Senator Baxley?")
>
> Sen. Baxley
> No.

To me, Baxley's "No" answer translates poorly into the claim that Baxley said social engineering in schools would lead to increased identification by school kids as gay. His answer seems to partly contradict the claim in your report.

It makes me suspicious that the reporter was engaged in invention and not reporting.

Please update the story to enable readers to follow the reasoning in PolitiFact's reporting, or else issue an appropriate correction if the reporter cannot support the claim in the article.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

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Sincerely,

Bryan W. White
editor
zebrafactcheck.com