

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 21, 2022

John F. Lansing
President and CEO
National Public Radio
111 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Lansing,

As you may be aware, National Public Radio (“NPR”) announced the launch of a “Disinformation Reporting team” within your organization on July 15, 2022.¹ The details of your initiative were vague, and the program itself is concerning given NPR’s proven track record of ironically spreading misinformation and disinformation related to the 2020 election. Given Congress’ oversight of taxpayer dollars, we ask for your cooperation in clarifying the role and scope of your new program.

On October 22, 2020, just weeks before the election, and amid Hunter Biden’s questionable business dealings with Ukraine, China, and the “big guy”, Joe Biden², you told your audience that “we [NPR] don’t want to waste our time on stories that are not real stories, and we don’t want to waste the listeners’ and readers’ time on stories that are just pure distractions.”³ Additionally, you abdicated your responsibility of earnestly reporting on a story of significant public interest, saying “...newsroom leaders decided not [to] pursue more coverage in this week’s newsletter.”⁴ Notwithstanding the story’s significant public interest, you willfully spread misinformation by suppressing a legitimate, verifiable story about significant political corruption within the Biden family.

Since your decision to suppress this important story, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and even reporters within your own outlet have admitted to the legitimacy of the contents within Hunter Biden’s laptop.⁵ Additionally, it is very concerning that your outlet gave a platform to Nina Jankowicz, who advocated for the creation of the Department of Homeland Security’s Orwellian “Disinformation Governance Board,” without including any opposing viewpoints.⁶ As you know, Ms. Jankowicz is a liberal Democratic operative who also spread misinformation regarding the Hunter Biden laptop story in the wake of an impending Presidential election,⁷ yet your reporters did not even bother asking her about it.

¹ Casey Morell (@csymr), *NPR Launches Disinformation Reporting team*, TWITTER (July 15, 2022, 3:07 PM), <https://twitter.com/csymr/status/1548021509242859529>; See also Terence Samuel, *NPR launches Disinformation Reporting team*, NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO (July 15, 2022, 1:21 PM), <https://www.npr.org/sections/npr-extra/2022/07/15/1111727112/npr-launches-disinformation-reporting-team>.

² Jonathan Turley, *Witness: Joe Biden Was “The Big Guy”*, JONATHANTURLEY.ORG (Oct. 22, 2022), <https://jonathanturley.org/2020/10/22/witness-joe-biden-was-the-big-guy/>

³ NPR Public Editor (@NPRpubliceditor), TWITTER (Oct. 22, 2020, 10:15 AM), https://twitter.com/NPRpubliceditor/status/1319281101223940096?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Bruce Golding, *Washington Post joins New York Times in finally admitting emails from Hunter Biden laptop are real*, NEW YORK POST (March 30, 2022, 7:29 PM), <https://nypost.com/2022/03/30/washington-post-admits-hunter-biden-laptop-is-real/>; See also Alexa Moutvelis, *NPR reporter blasts own newsroom: Hunter Biden’s laptop has ‘always been’ a story*, FOX NEWS (April 8, 2022, 4:10 PM), <https://www.foxnews.com/media/npr-reporter-blasts-own-newsroom-hunter-bidens-laptop-always-been-story>.

⁶ Shannon Bond, *She joined DHS to fight disinformation. She says she was halted by...disinformation*, NPR (May 21, 2022, 5:00 AM), <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/21/1100438703/dhs-disinformation-board-nina-jankowicz>.

⁷ Nina Jankowicz (@wiczipedia), TWITTER (March 4, 2020, 8:48 AM), <https://twitter.com/wiczipedia/status/1235200450179354624>.

We are concerned with the ability of your newsroom to be the “arbiters of truth”, and police so-called disinformation, without it being a ruse to advance a left-wing political agenda. Given the foregoing, we ask that you answer the following questions:

1. Why has your news organization not followed the lead of the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, and repudiated, apologized for, or retracted your decision to suppress the legitimate story of Hunter Biden’s laptop that was in the public interest amid a Presidential election?
2. Why does a story promoting Hunter Biden’s memoir on your website still contain the verifiably false statement that “[n]umerous news organizations cast doubt on the credibility of the laptop story” without a correction?⁸
3. Does your news organization still “stand by” your misleading reporting on other issues, like Nina Totenberg’s claim that Justice Sotomayor asked Justice Gorsuch to wear a mask? As you know, her entire article was publicly debunked and repudiated by Justices Roberts, Sotomayor, and Gorsuch in a rare public statement.⁹
4. How is “disinformation” and “misinformation” defined by your organization?
5. What prompted NPR to launch this “Disinformation Reporting team”?
6. Does this “Disinformation Reporting team” have any connection to the Biden Administration’s “Disinformation Governance Board”?
7. What third-party companies, fact-checking organizations, or other outside groups, if any, will NPR work with to determine the credibility or newsworthiness for your “disinformation team”?
8. According to Federal Election Commission records, you have contributed money to several Democratic campaigns.¹⁰ Given your left-wing political bias, how will you be able to oversee your “disinformation team” in an unbiased and non-partisan matter?

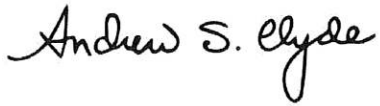
Given the United States’ significant taxpayer funding of NPR, it is critical that the public trust in your news organization be restored. Taxpayer dollars should not be funding poorly documented and clearly biased reporting. Please provide a response to the above questions by August 1, 2022.

Sincerely,

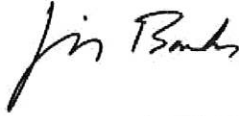
⁸ Ron Elving, *Hunter Biden’s Memoir ‘Beautiful Things’ Seeks To Tell Just Where He’s Been*, NPR (April 1, 2021, 6:36 PM), https://www.npr.org/2021/03/31/983159102/hunter-bidens-memoir-beautiful-things-seeks-to-tell-just-where-hes-been?utm_campaign=storyshare&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social.

⁹ Adam Liptak, *Roberts, Sotomayor and Gorsuch Address Reports of Conflict Over Masks*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Jan. 19, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/19/us/politics/supreme-court-masks.html>.

¹⁰ Individual Contributions by John Lansing, FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION (accessed July 18, 2022), https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/individual-contributions/?contributor_name=Lansing%2C+John&contributor_occupation=Media+executive&two_year_transaction_period=2020&min_date=01%2F01%2F2019&max_date=12%2F31%2F2020.



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