



February 19, 2023

A.G. Sulzberger, Publisher
Joseph Kahn, Editor-in-chief
The New York Times Company
620 Eighth Avenue
New York, NY 10018

Re: Stop spreading misinformation

Dear Sirs,

I am signing on to the following letter from GLAAD. They can be reached at: ItsTime@glaad.org.

The New York Times has long been the standard for excellence in journalism: A media outlet that New Yorkers, Americans, and people around the world looked to for ethical, thorough reporting, and thoughtful opinion pieces. But for more than a year, the New York Times has stood for something else: irresponsible, biased coverage of transgender people. The Times has repeatedly platformed cisgender (non-transgender) people spreading inaccurate and harmful misinformation about transgender people and issues. This is damaging to the paper's credibility. And it is damaging to all LGBTQ people, especially our youth, who say debates about trans equality negatively impact their mental health, which is a contributing factor to the high suicide rates for LGBTQ youth.

It is appalling that the Times would dedicate so many resources and pages to platforming the voices of extremist anti-LGBTQ activists who have built their careers on denigrating and dehumanizing LGBTQ people, especially transgender people. While there have been a few fair stories, mostly human interest stories, those articles are not getting front-page placement or sent to app users via push notification like the irresponsible pieces are.

THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY AND OUR ALLIES HAVE HAD ENOUGH AND WE DEMAND THE NEW YORK TIMES TAKE ACTION.

Article after article, page after page, day after day, we have tried to educate you and your colleagues. We have sent emails, made calls, tried to help reporters source stories, and in one case, after more than four months of trying, some of us were even able to sit down and talk with you. It is clear that our behind-the-scenes outreach has had zero impact. What has had impact, however, is your irresponsible coverage.

The Science Desk decided to spend more than a year undermining support for transgender youth by writing "just asking questions" stories about medically approved best practices for gender-affirming healthcare. The Opinion editors gave noted cisgender heterosexual Pamela Paul space for her unfounded thoughts about how LGBTQ people should describe themselves, as if the Times could not find anyone with lived experience in the LGBTQ community to write about our issues. Then the Times boasted about hiring David French, an attorney for the Alliance Defending Freedom, an organization that the Southern Poverty Law Center designated an anti-LGBTQ hate group that actively spreads misinformation about LGBTQ people and pushes baseless legislation and lawsuits to legalize discrimination.

Think your stories are innocently "just asking questions"? The State of Texas quoted Emily Bazelon's June 2022 report in the New York Times Magazine to further target families of trans youth in court documents over their private, evidence-based healthcare decisions. Here are facts that the Times chooses not to include in favor of fringe anti-trans voices who are not experts on medical care for trans youth: Every major medical association supports gender-affirming care as best practices care that is safe and lifesaving and has widespread consensus in the medical and scientific communities. Yet the Times continues to churn out pieces that anti-trans extremists use to harm children and families. In November, the Times published a story that got the science of gender-affirming care so wrong that the WPATH had to write a multi-page tear-down explaining how the Times misrepresented the facts at every turn.

Also in November, our community was attacked in Colorado Springs at an LGBTQ safe space, Club Q. When reporting on the heroes who saved lives that night, the Times misgendered a transgender woman who helped stop the shooter.



Advocates pushed the Times to update its story to reflect that the woman was transgender and not "a drag dancer." After pushing the Times to correct the story for an entire day, the story was only updated after advocates on the ground threatened to withhold further Club Q survivors for Times interviews until the change was made. The change should have been made immediately because the story was inaccurate and disrespectful. The fact that this change was only made because the Times wanted access to sources is shameful.

We could spend paragraphs listing every anti-LGBTQ and every anti-trans article the Times has printed in just the past year, but we would rather focus on action. **Here are our demands for the New York Times:**

1. STOP: Stop printing biased anti-trans stories. Stop the anti-trans narratives immediately. Stop platforming anti-trans activists. Stop presenting anti-trans extremists as average Americans without an agenda. Stop questioning trans people's right to exist and access medical care. Stop questioning best practice medical care. Stop questioning science that is SETTLED.

We will do all we can to make sure that Times writers and editors have the necessary information and access to experts to report responsibly on trans people and issues. But we will be strongly recommending that trans youth and their families skip interviews with the Times, in order to keep them out of harm's way.

Timing: Immediately.

2. LISTEN: So many trans people are wary of the Times, and do not trust the Times. Hold a meeting with transgender community members and leaders, and listen throughout that meeting. Listen to trans sources, trans people, and organizations working with trans people. Listen to trans youth who have been abandoned and abused by their parents. Listen to trans youth who have been loved and supported by their parents. Listen to trans adults who can tell you about their experiences and shed light on what it was like to be a young person.

Timing: Hold this meeting within 2 months.

3. HIRE: Genuinely invest in hiring trans writers and editors, full time on your staff. We know many trans writers and editors do not trust the Times. We don't trust you either, so we don't blame them. But do the work: Stop, listen, and hire. If you stop the egregious, irresponsible coverage, and listen to trans people, you will start to rebuild credibility and trust. It is clear the cisgender writers and editors at the Times regardless of their sexual orientation or membership in the queer community just are not able to cover trans people and issues accurately. So let trans people do it. Let trans people into your workdays, your briefings, and your story meetings.

Timing: Hire at least 2 trans people on the Opinion side and at least 2 trans people on the news side within 3 months.

Repeatedly, the Times has shown a willful disregard of LGBTQ community voices and the concerns so many have shared about their inaccurate, exclusionary, often ridiculous pieces. We see media outlets like TIME, Vox, USA Today, and even Jon Stewart, John Oliver, and smaller local outlets, doing a much better job covering the trans community than the New York Times. We are not having this conversation with other mainstream media outlets about problematic coverage - only the Times.

For those of us who truly treasured the Times coverage for so many years, it is appalling to see how the news and opinion pages are now full of misguided, inaccurate, and disingenuous "both sides" fearmongering and bad faith "just asking questions" coverage. We won't stand for the Times platforming lies, bias, fringe theories, and dangerous inaccuracies. We demand fair coverage, we demand that the Times platform trans voices as both sources and full-time writers and editors, and we demand a meeting between Times leadership and the transgender community.

It's well past time for the Times to change.

Sincerely,

Print Name & Address _____
