

## NPR Labeled as State-Affiliated Media

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✓ Fact Checked

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### STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Twitter had labeled NPR “state-affiliated media,” categorizing it similarly to Russia’s state-run RT and China’s Xinhua News Agency
- › Backlash ensued, prompting Twitter to downgrade the label to the slightly less jarring “government-funded media,” alongside BBC, PBS and Voice of America
- › Multiple NPR executives have a revolving door with the propaganda network in Washington
- › In addition to receiving funding from the U.S. government, NPR receives significant funding from Bill Gates and other oligarchs
- › NPR also appears to have a vendetta against yours truly and other vaccine safety advocates, and regularly favors propaganda over ethics and journalistic standards in its reporting

When you think about state-affiliated media, propaganda-driven outlets in Russia and China may come to mind — not familiar news outlets right here in the U.S. However, if you view National Public Radio (NPR) on Twitter, you’ll see it’s now labeled “government-funded media.”<sup>1</sup>

Initially, Twitter had labeled NPR “state-affiliated media,” categorizing it similarly to Russia’s state-run RT and China’s Xinhua News Agency.<sup>2</sup> However, backlash ensued, prompting Twitter to downgrade the label to the slightly less jarring “government-funded media,” alongside BBC, PBS and Voice of America.<sup>3</sup>

# Why NPR Was Labeled State-Affiliated

Upon the initial state-affiliated label, Twitter executive Elon Musk tweeted, “Seems accurate,”<sup>4</sup> along with Twitter’s definition for state-affiliated media accounts:<sup>5</sup>

*“State-affiliated media is defined as outlets where the state exercises control over editorial content through financial resources, direct or indirect political pressures, and/or control over production and distribution. Accounts belonging to state-affiliated media entities, their editors-in-chief, and/or their prominent staff may be labeled. We will also add labels to Tweets that share links to state-affiliated media websites.”*

NPR quickly took issue with the label, with John Lansing, NPR’s president, tweeting April 5, 2023:<sup>6</sup>

*“NPR stands for freedom of speech & holding the powerful accountable. A vigorous, vibrant free press is essential to the health of our democracy ... We are disturbed to see last night that Twitter has labeled NPR as ‘state-affiliated media,’ a description that, per Twitter’s own guidelines, does not apply to NPR ...”*

Bill Chappell, NPR reporter and producer, also responded, stating, “NPR operates independently of the U.S. government. And while federal money is important to the overall public media system, NPR gets less than 1% of its annual budget, on average, from federal sources.”<sup>7</sup> After NPR correspondent Bobby Allyn informed Musk of this, Musk responded, “we should fix it.”<sup>8</sup> By April 9, NPR’s “state-affiliated” label had been quietly changed to “government-funded.”<sup>9</sup>

## ‘NPR Absolutely Is US State Propaganda’

Not everyone disagreed with Twitter’s state-affiliated assessment for NPR, however. Writing for the Ron Paul Institute, Caitlin Johnstone pointed out that Lansing formerly served as the CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).<sup>10</sup>

“USAGM is the U.S. government narrative management umbrella which runs overt US state propaganda outlets like Radio Free Asia, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and Voice of America,” she noted, referencing a 1977 article from The New York Times,<sup>11</sup> which describes a worldwide propaganda network built by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The CIA used the radio outlets to broadcast its messages around the world. And to this day, USAGM receives hundreds of millions in funding from the U.S. government. According to Johnstone:<sup>12</sup>

*“The New York Times explicitly names Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Free Asia as part of the network constructed by the Central Intelligence Agency to circulate propaganda. As Fair.org's Bryce Greene recently noted, USAGM received \$810 million in US federal funding in 2022, which is more than twice the amount RT received from Russia for its global operations in 2021.”*

Further, Lansing is just one propagandist at NPR's helm. Johnstone continues:<sup>13</sup>

*“Lansing's history is not an anomaly; NPR is regularly overseen by executives who came directly from senior positions in Washington's official propaganda network. From 1998 to 2008 NPR's president was a man named Kevin Klose, who previously ran Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and then returned to that job after his decade-long NPR stint.*

*A man named Ken Stern became NPR's executive vice president in 1999 and was appointed CEO in 2006; prior to that he was the senior advisor to the director of the USAGM's International Broadcasting Bureau.*

*So it is a bit funny that John Lansing is now cited complaining about NPR being labeled “state-affiliated media” on Twitter, given that he has devoted his life to promulgating US state-affiliated media. NPR receives funding from the US government, consistently advances the information interests of the US government, and is routinely run by professional propagandists of the US government.”*

It's interesting, too, that while NPR downplayed the funding it receives from the U.S. government in arguing against its state-affiliated label, it has previously stated that federal funding is essential to NPR:<sup>14,15</sup>

*"Federal funding is **essential** to public radio's service to the American public and its continuation is critical for both stations and program producers, including NPR.*

*Public radio stations receive annual grants directly from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) that make up an important part of a diverse revenue mix that includes listener support, corporate sponsorship and grants. Stations, in turn, draw on this mix of public and privately sourced revenue to pay NPR and other public radio producers for their programming.*

*These **station programming fees** comprise a significant portion of NPR's **largest source of revenue**. The loss of federal funding would undermine the stations' ability to pay NPR for programming, thereby weakening the institution.*

*Elimination of federal funding would result in fewer programs, less journalism — **especially local journalism** — and eventually the loss of public radio stations, particularly in rural and economically distressed communities."*

## **NPR Also Receives Funding From Oligarchs**

Aside from its federal ties, NPR also receives considerable funding from Bill Gates and other oligarchs. "When you live in an oligarchy like the U.S., receiving funding from oligarchs is not meaningfully distinct from receiving funding from the state," Johnstone points out.<sup>16</sup>

Via more than 30,000 grants, Gates has contributed at least \$319 million to the media, Alan MacLeod, a senior staff writer for MintPress News, revealed:<sup>17</sup>

*"Recipients of this cash include many of America's most important news outlets, including CNN, NBC, NPR, PBS and The Atlantic.*

*Gates also sponsors a myriad of influential foreign organizations, including the BBC, The Guardian, The Financial Times and The Daily Telegraph in the United Kingdom; prominent European newspapers such as Le Monde (France), Der Spiegel (Germany) and El País (Spain); as well as big global broadcasters like Al-Jazeera.”*

Examples of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grants include \$24,663,066 to NPR. As you might suspect, Gates’ donations come with strings attached, so it shouldn’t come as a surprise that NPR doesn’t stray far from the official narrative on any given topic. Gates’ donations to NPR were intended to target coverage of global health and education:<sup>18</sup>

*“When Gates gives money to newsrooms, it restricts how the money is used — often for topics, like global health and education, on which the foundation works — which can help elevate its agenda in the news media.*

*... Since 2000, the Gates Foundation has given NPR \$17.5 million [now up to \$24.6 million<sup>19</sup>] through 10 charitable grants — all of them earmarked for coverage of global health and education, specific issues on which Gates works ...*

*Even when NPR publishes critical reporting on Gates, it can feel scripted. In February 2018, NPR ran a story headlined ‘Bill Gates Addresses ‘Tough Questions’ on Poverty and Power.’ The ‘tough questions’ NPR posed in this Q&A were mostly based on a list curated by Gates himself, which he previously answered in a letter posted to his foundation’s website.”*

## **NPR Favors Propaganda Over Ethics**

NPR also appears to have a vendetta against yours truly and other vaccine safety advocates. In May 2021, we received an email from Geoff Brumfiel, a senior editor and correspondent with NPR.

According to NPR, “his reporting focuses on the intersection of science and national security,”<sup>20</sup> but as soon as I read the subject line of the email — “The business of anti-

vaccine propaganda” [sp] — it was clear that the line of questioning that would follow was not journalism but rather a PR piece for the pharmaceutical industry.

Indeed, Brumfiel’s email did not disappoint, nor did his resulting article, “For Some Anti-Vaccine Advocates, Misinformation Is Part Of A Business.”<sup>21</sup> True to form for NPR, the article presents a slanted view of vaccine safety advocates designed to disparage and discredit those who spoke out against COVID propaganda.

Conveniently, Brumfiel included only one short segment from our emailed response to his questions, but neglected to mention NPR’s tight connections with the Gates Foundation — and the hundreds of articles NPR has released that are highly favorable toward the Gates Foundation and the work it funds.<sup>22</sup>

Then, in a September 24, 2021, broadcast, [NPR reporter Robin Young](#) referred to me as “the biggest disseminator of lies about COVID” — a false statement originating with a dark money-funded organization called Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH). Young then went on to claim that I started America’s Frontline Doctors, an independent organization that, in reality, I am not a member of and have no affiliation with.

The hit pieces further exemplify NPR’s habit of putting propaganda ahead of ethics and even basic journalism. Facebook’s vice president of content policy, Monika Bickert, issued a statement August 18, 2021, saying there is no evidence to support CCDH’s claims, and that the people named by the CCDH as being responsible for the vast majority of vaccine misinformation on social media were in fact only responsible for a tiny fraction — 0.05% — of all vaccine content on Facebook.<sup>23</sup>

If she’d actually done her research, Young would have discovered that the key tenet of her broadcast was false. Instead, the piece shows that NPR’s guidelines in its Ethics Handbook — that its journalists must “Be able to identify the source of each fact” and are supposed to “explain why that person or organization is credible and authoritative” — are, in fact, just fluff.<sup>24</sup>

## **Controlling the Narrative Means Controlling Reality**

It's important to be knowledgeable about the alliances your media outlets have made, and where their allegiance lies, in order to see the truth. As it stands, your perception of reality is being altered by mainstream media outlets and Big Tech, which are churning out propaganda pieces and using censorship to control what you can and can't see.

Remember the saying, "The pen is mightier than the sword"? This old adage is coming true, as whoever controls the media — and the narrative behind it — gains domination over the world. As Johnstone put it:<sup>25</sup>

*"All this bickering and squabbling about whose voice should be uplifted as trustworthy and whose voice should be squelched as untrustworthy is just a manifestation of the fact that powerful people understand something most ordinary members of the public do not: that whoever controls the narrative controls the world. If you can exert control over the way people perceive reality, then you can control reality itself."*

*"Until the public becomes more aware of this fact, our lives will be subject to the whims of oligarchs, government agencies, and mass media propagandists. Not until then will we be able to awaken from our propaganda-induced coma enough to shake off the psychological manipulations which keep us marching to the tune of oligarchy and empire, and use the power of our numbers to force the emergence of a healthy world that benefits us all."*

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