

# THE TRUTH & TRANSPARENCY IN NEWS MEDIA ACT

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## A BILL

To establish national standards for transparency, corrections procedures, methodologies, and accountability for fact-checking and news verification organizations, to promote public trust, evidence-based journalism, and prompt correction of misinformation, while preserving First Amendment freedoms.

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## SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the “**Truth & Transparency in News Media Act of 20XX.**”

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## TITLE I — DEFINITIONS

### Sec. 101. Definitions

For purposes of this Act:

1. “**News outlet**” means any organization, broadcast licensee, digital publisher, cable or satellite provider, or online platform that regularly publishes or disseminates news, reporting, or factual claims to the public.
  2. “**Fact-checking organization**” means any entity that publicly evaluates the accuracy of statements, claims, or news content.
  3. “**Correction**” means a substantive update acknowledging an error and presenting corrected information.
  4. “**Methodology**” means the standards, criteria, analytical procedures, and evidence evaluation processes used to determine factual accuracy.
  5. “**Public file**” means publicly accessible online records maintained under this Act.
  6. “**Independent Review Board (IRB)**” means an external, rotating panel established under Title IV.
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## TITLE II — TRANSPARENCY AND DISCLOSURE STANDARDS

### Sec. 201. Required Transparency Disclosures

All news outlets and fact-checkers operating in the United States shall maintain publicly accessible disclosures including:

**a. Source List Requirements**

For each fact-check or reported claim, a list of primary sources used, with hyperlinks where possible.

**b. Methodology Statement**

A description of:

- Source weighting criteria
- Standard of evidence
- Verification process
- Editorial review steps

**c. Reviewer Identity & Conflict Disclosure**

Outlets must disclose for each fact-check or investigative report:

- Reviewer’s role (analyst, editor, etc.)
- Relevant financial or organizational conflicts
- Affiliations or funding sources of the reviewing unit

(Names optional; unique reviewer ID acceptable for privacy.)

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**Sec. 202. Evidence vs. Interpretation Separation**

All fact-checks and major analytical reports must include three clearly demarcated sections:

1. Raw Evidence — undisputed factual material
  2. Interpretation — explanation of reasoning or context
  3. Judgment — classification (“False,” “Unverified,” “Unsupported,” etc.)
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**Sec. 203. Standardized Rating Definitions**

To prevent manipulation through vague judgment labels:

- False — directly contradicted by verifiable evidence

- Unsupported — insufficient evidence exists to justify claim
- Unverified — evidence not yet available
- Misleading — must cite specific logical omission or distortion
- Accurate — consistent with available evidence

No other rating terms may be used unless publicly defined in equivalent clarity.

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### **TITLE III — CORRECTIONS AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### **Sec. 301. Mandatory Public Correction Logs**

Every news outlet and fact-checker shall maintain:

- a. A publicly accessible correction log
- b. Timestamp of error discovery
- c. Timestamp of correction publication
- d. Description of change made
- e. Explanation of error source

Logs must be archived for 5 years.

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#### **Sec. 302. Timeliness Standards**

News outlets must:

- Issue corrections within 72 hours of verifying an error, unless extraordinary circumstances exist.
  - Prominently display corrections at the point of original publication (digital) or during equivalent broadcast segments (broadcast).
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#### **Sec. 303. No-Government-Truth Clause**

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize federal agencies to:

- Determine what is true or false
- Regulate political or ideological content
- Influence editorial decisions

This Act regulates transparency and process, not speech content.

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## **TITLE IV — INDEPENDENT REVIEW BOARDS**

### **Sec. 401. Establishment of Independent Review Boards**

The National Institute for Media Standards (NIMS) is established within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

NIMS shall create rotating Independent Review Boards composed of:

- Academics in journalism, statistics, or media studies
- Experienced editors or investigative reporters
- Public-interest transparency experts
- Data and evidence analysts

No board may have a partisan majority.

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### **Sec. 402. Quarterly Review Audits**

Fact-checkers and large news outlets (as defined by audience reach) must submit:

- Random samples of fact-checks
- Methodologies
- Correction logs
- Source documentation

The IRB shall produce a public quarterly report grading:

- Methodological rigor
- Transparency compliance
- Correction timeliness
- Evidence vs. interpretation clarity

These reports may not opine on political correctness or preferred narratives.

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## **TITLE V — OPEN DATA & REPRODUCIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

### **Sec. 501. Public Access to Underlying Data**

News outlets and fact-checkers must publish, when legally and ethically permissible:

- Datasets used for analysis
- Calculations and statistical models
- Transcripts, documents, and source materials

Sensitive-source exceptions apply (national security, whistleblowers, etc.).

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### **Sec. 502. Reproducibility Standard**

Any published analytic claim must include enough information for an independent reviewer to reproduce or challenge the result.

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## **TITLE VI — COMPETITIVE FACT-CHECKING ECOSYSTEM**

### **Sec. 601. Market Competition Grants**

The NTIA shall provide grants to support:

- New fact-checking organizations
- Local investigative journalism
- AI-assisted evidence verification tools
- Public-interest media transparency research

No grant may be conditioned on ideological alignment.

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### **Sec. 602. Prohibition on Exclusive Government Fact-Checking Contracts**

No federal agency may contract with a single fact-checking entity for exclusive truth-validation services.

Contracts must be open to:

- Multiple competing organizations
- Transparent scoring

- Periodic re-evaluation

Competition prevents monopolization of “truth authority.”

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## **TITLE VII — ADVERSARIAL FACT-CHECKING PANELS**

### **Sec. 701. Panels for Disputed Claims**

For contested topics of national interest:

- NIMS may convene Adversarial Fact-Checking Panels
- Two or more fact-checking teams present evidence
- A neutral moderator compiles a side-by-side comparison report
- The report includes all evidence, disagreements, and competing interpretations

Panels must operate transparently and cannot issue binding determinations.

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## **TITLE VIII — ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE**

### **Sec. 801. Enforcement Through Transparency**

Violations of this Act shall be enforced through:

- Civil penalties for failure to publish required disclosures
- Requirements to correct incomplete disclosures
- Public notices of noncompliance
- Suspension of eligibility for federal advertising or grants

No penalty may be based on the political, ideological, or factual content of news.

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### **Sec. 802. Preemption of State Laws**

This Act preempts state laws only insofar as they conflict with federal transparency standards.

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## **TITLE IX — SEVERABILITY**

If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional, the remainder shall not be affected.

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**TITLE X — EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Act takes effect one year after enactment.

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