



RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

August 23, 2021

Ms. Daisy Veerasingham
Associated Press
200 Liberty Street
New York, New York 10281

Ms. Veerasingham:

I assumed your letter was to notify me that you were issuing a retraction of the partisan smear piece you published last week. Instead, you had the temerity to complain about the deserved blowback that your botched and discredited attempt to concoct a political narrative has received. This ploy will not work to divert attention from the fact that the Associated Press published a false narrative that will lead some to decline effective treatment for COVID infections.

On August 18, the AP published an article titled, "DeSantis top donor invests in COVID drug governor promotes." The purpose of the headline and the framing of the story was to smear me by insinuating that Florida's push to expand awareness of and access to monoclonal antibody treatments was done to boost Regeneron's profit, rather than to simply help Floridians in need. Indeed, as the federal government long ago bought the entire stock of Regeneron's COVID monoclonal treatment, it is not even a plausible concept.

The AP produced zero evidence that Florida's efforts are being undertaken for any reason other than to help Floridians recover from COVID. This will have real consequences for people's health, especially given that the Regeneron monoclonal antibody treatment has a proven track record and has been touted by both the Trump and Biden administrations.

This story is a baseless conspiracy theory. While the public's trust in corporate outlets like the AP is at historic lows, there is no doubt that some will decline to seek life-saving treatment as a result of the AP's inflammatory headline.

That the AP has received vigorous pushback is something that should be expected given the brazenness of your political attack and the fact that your false narrative will cost lives. You cannot recklessly smear your political opponents and then expect to be immune from criticism. This is especially true when the effect of your false narrative jeopardizes the health of those who could otherwise benefit from treatment with monoclonal antibodies.

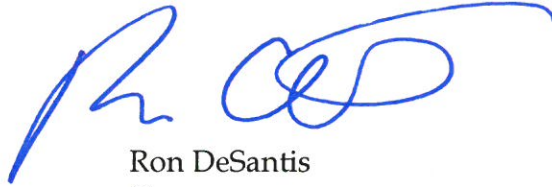
I stand by the work of my staff who went out of their way to provide the AP with the factual information necessary to dispel the AP's preferred narrative. That their response was effective in exposing the AP's partisan agenda represented a valuable public service, as it reassured many that the Regeneron monoclonal treatment is effective.

The AP's attempt to create a political narrative has backfired, as the conspiracy theory has been easily debunked and the credibility of your organization has been further diminished. This is what happens when you decide on the headline and narrative before you begin reporting. The corporate media's "clicks-first, facts-later" approach to journalism is harming our country.

You succeeded in publishing a misleading, clickbait headline about one of your political opponents, but at the expense of deterring individuals infected with COVID from seeking life-saving treatment, which will cost lives.

Was it worth it?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron DeSantis", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Ron DeSantis
Governor