redstatewatcher.com

An anonymously operated conservative website that republishes false and misleading stories, usually about U.S. politics.

Ownership and Financing
The website does not disclose its ownership. However, RedStateWatcher.com is owned by Sanj Oryavong, according to a 2016 report from The Washington Post, and website registration records. Oryavong told NewsGuard he is a programmer. He lives in Northern California and previously operated a website called Bigfoot Evidence.

The Post reported that Oryavong and his brother, Sam, operate one of the largest Facebook pages that promotes U.S. President Donald Trump, with over 4 million followers.

The site runs advertisements.

Content
The site publishes a running feed of breaking news stories, mostly on U.S. politics. The site republishes other outlets' news stories. Oryavong told NewsGuard in a February 2020 email, “The aggregated stories are aggregated by algorithm. I am a programmer so I automate as much as possible.”

Some stories consist of just a headline and a tweet or a photograph, with the caption “Submitted by MAGA Student.”

Stories about politics support the Trump administration and Republican policies. The site appears to remove content from the site after two months, based on NewsGuard’s review.

Typical headlines include “Appeals court upholds Trump administration rules against Title X funding for abortion.” “Anderson Cooper Grills Bernie on His Multi-Trillion Dollar Medicare Plan,” and “Trump just absolutely roasted MSNBC talking about Celebrity Apprentice.”

Credibility
RedStateWatcher.com republishes links to news from other websites, ranging from local television affiliates to conservative websites such as TheFederalist.com, the Washington Examiner, Breitbart.com, and The Daily Caller.

RedStateWatcher.com has republished false stories. For example, in February 2020, the website shared a link from ZeroHedge.com that promoted a conspiracy theory about the 2020 Wuhan coronavirus outbreak. The story, headlined “Did China Steal Coronavirus From Canada And Weaponize It?”, falsely claimed that the coronavirus outbreak was engineered by Chinese agents who infiltrated a Canadian lab and transported the virus back to Wuhan, China. The earliest version of the virus “may have first been weaponized in Canada before it was obtained by a doctor at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, who is also a leader of the Bat Virus Infection and Immunization Group, and ‘Accidentally or not’ released into the public,” the article that appeared on RedStateWatcher.com said.

Another story on the site, which was attributed to ZeroHedge.com, falsely stated that “a weaponized version of the coronavirus (one which may have originally been obtained from Canada), was released by Wuhan’s Institute of Virology.”

While it is true that the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, there is no evidence that the coronavirus was stolen by Chinese spies from a Canadian lab. Politifact, FactCheck.org, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. all concluded that the theory about Chinese spies stealing the virus from Canada is false. While the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. (CBS) did report that two Chinese scientists were escorted from a lab in Winnipeg, Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada told the CBC that the scientists were asked to leave due to an investigation of what it described as a “policy breach,” and that the matter was not connected to the coronavirus outbreak.
Eric Morrissette, a spokesman for the Public Health Agency of Canada, told FactCheck.org by email, “This is misinformation and there is no factual basis for claims being made on social media.”

Oryavong defended the stories in an email to NewsGuard.

“The title of their article was asking a question ‘Did China Steal Coronavirus From Canada And Weaponize It? I would like to know, is it wrong to ask a question?’ He added, “Considering the fact that most countries are constantly seeking ways to protect their country, either defensively or offensively, it isn’t an unreasonable question to ask if something is a bioweapon.”

The site also published false stories about the August 2019 intelligence community whistleblower complaint that triggered an impeachment inquiry into U.S. President Donald Trump.

A September 2019 story linked to a false report from The Federalist, which claimed that a form used by the unnamed whistleblower to file a complaint against the president had been edited to remove a requirement that the whistleblower have firsthand knowledge of wrongdoing. “The Intelligence community secretly eliminated a requirement that whistleblower complaints contain only direct, first-hand knowledge of wrongdoing allegations,” the site quoted The Federalist as reporting.

In another story from October 2019, the site quoted One America News Network as reporting that “the Intelligence community secretly eliminated a requirement that whistleblower complaints contain only direct, first-hand knowledge of wrongdoing allegations.”

While the whistleblower form had been edited before the August 2019 complaint about President Trump was filed, the edits did not change the requirements that governed who could file a complaint. In addition, the whistleblower complaint never required that a person filing the complaint have firsthand knowledge of events that occurred. The Inspector General of the Intelligence Community released a statement directly after The Federalist's report, confirming that no requirements had been changed that referred to firsthand knowledge of wrongdoing. RedStateWatcher.com's story did not include this update or correction.

An April 2018 story, headlined “BREAKING: ROSENSTEIN JUST CLEARED PRESIDENT TRUMP!”, explained that then-deputy attorney general Rod Rosenstein had told the president that he was not a target in a New York-based investigation of his former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen. The site, at the time, rewrote the headline from a FoxNews.com story, which had a different headline: “Rosenstein tells Trump he is not a target of Michael Cohen investigation.”

The headline misleadingly implied that the president was cleared of wrongdoing, although at the time, then-Special Counsel Robert Mueller was investigating the president and charges that Russia meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

In June 2018, a RedStateWatcher.com story falsely reported that Democratic U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters was “criminally charged” after a conservative journalist filed a police report alleging Waters swatted her hand away while she was trying to speak with the California congresswoman. The story reported that while the journalist, Laura Loomer, filed a report with police against Waters, but prosecutors had not brought charges. A video that Loomer posted of the interaction also does not appear to support Loomer’s allegation.

Because RedStateWatcher.com has frequently republished links to false information, often from unreliable websites, NewsGuard has determined that the website repeatedly publishes false information, does not gather and present information responsibly, and does not avoid deceptive headlines.

Asked about the site’s false claims, Oryavong told NewsGuard in an email that most of the site’s content is republished from other websites. “As with all websites, there is a responsibility to some degree about what is posted,” he said. However, he added, “Aggregated articles are not my personal words and they are selected by an algorithm.”

RedStateWatcher.com does not publish a corrections policy, nor does it appear to publish updates if stories contain errors. NewsGuard did not find any examples of corrected stories. In addition, as of February 2020, all of the stories cited above except for the stories on the coronavirus outbreak had been deleted from the site without notifying readers. Because the website does not correct inaccuracies in its reporting, and deletes stories without notifying readers, NewsGuard has determined that the website does not meet its standard for regularly making
Oryyong told NewsGuard that it was unreasonable to hold a website run by a single person to the same standards as news organizations run by many people. "I am a single person but these corporations have dozens to hundreds of people to check on each others work yet they make mistakes and aren't flagged for it like I am," he said.

RedStateWatcher.com features the sections News and Trending on the site, and does not label any of its stories as opinion. However, several stories that appear in the news section include opinion.

For example, in February 2020, the site published an article titled "The Looney Side of Bernie," which consisted solely of a Tweet stating, in part, that Democrats "are savages". Another February 2020 story, titled "Miracle On Ice Team Shamed By Washington Post For Meeting Trump," criticized the Post's reporting on the appearance of members of the 1980 U.S. Olympic champion hockey team appearing with the president at a campaign rally. "The Post spun the story as if the team deserved the harassment," the article said.

A third article from February 2020, titled "Obama has made things worse for the anti-Sanders Democratic establishment by refusing to engage on behalf of any candidate," said that former president Barack Obama "has made things worse for the anti-Sanders Democratic establishment by refusing to engage on behalf of any candidate."

Because RedStateWatcher.com regularly publishes unlabeled opinion stories in its news section, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

Oryyong told NewsGuard that content that is automatically republished on the site does not contain opinion, and that some original content does include his opinion. He said he planned to label opinion articles in the future.

### Transparency

The site does not provide information about its owners or editors, or identify editorial staff that curates content for RedStateWatcher.com. Oryyong told NewsGuard in an email that he is the website's sole employee.

The site does not feature an About page, and Oryyong is not identified as the website's owner or editor. No contact information is provided on the site.

Asked about the site's transparency, Oryyong told NewsGuard "Not much information is disclosed because there isn't much info to be disclosed. I am the owner of this website, I post the content, I programmed the website, I manage the website, I fund myself through advertising on my website. I currently do not have any content creators."

Advertisements are distinguished from editorial content.

### History

RedStateWatcher.com was registered in August 2015. The domains MAGAnews.io, which was registered in 2017, and RedStateRevive.com, which was registered in 2018, had published similar content to RedStateWatcher.com. As of February 2020, the domains redirected users to RedStateWatcher.com.

Editor's Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on March 2, 2020.
Credibility

http://redstatewatcher.com/article.asp?id=130928
http://www.weeklystandard.com/holmes-lybrandon/fact-check-is-maxine-waters-getting-criminally-charged_p_0mpwtrue
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http://redstatewatcher.com/article.asp?id=159704

Transparency

http://redstatewatcher.com/

History

https://whois.icann.org/en/lookup?name=redstatewave.com
https://www.whois.com/whoislookup?name=redstatewatcher.com
https://www.godaddy.com/whois/results.aspx?
domain=maganews.ro&receiptID=Response%3AEMeEzIzFeOoXeGsQUpzu1H4Mife571uEVIhckovn491WSGYz2dVTtpdFqdf1efDWML3CbiRgfr-68J4hFe0ORWb88JvWw5_A1mFf85imxSTn6mmfUKgW3mNHyWMrGAw5EQFzV9m