

americafirstprojects.com

A pro-Trump website that has published unsubstantiated and misleading claims, including about COVID-19.

Ownership and Financing

AmericaFirstProjects.com’s ownership could not be determined by NewsGuard. The site’s About page describes America First Projects as a “collaborative project between dozens of individuals, groups, and organizations who are committed to maintaining the United States of America as the greatest nation in the history of man.”

According to the site, America First Projects has an affiliated nonprofit called America First Projects News Foundation. However, no organization with that name is registered as a nonprofit with the IRS.

The website lists Dustin Stockton as America First Projects’ chairman and chief executive officer, and Jennifer Lawrence as the website’s vice president for PR and communications.

Lawrence is also the communications director of We Build the Wall, a nonprofit organization that accepts grassroots donations that the organization said would fund an independent effort to build a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico, according to a website representing We Build The Wall, warroomthewall.com.

In August 2020, four of We Build The Wall’s leaders — including Steve Bannon, President Trump’s former chief strategist — were charged in a federal indictment with defrauding hundreds of thousands of dollars from the organization’s donors by diverting the donations for personal profit.

In an article posted on AmericaFirstProjects.com in August 2020, Stockton said that “heavily armed federal law enforcement officers executed a warrant for the cellphones of Dustin Stockton (me) and Jennifer Lawrence in the predawn hours on August 20th while simultaneously arresting Stephen Bannon, Brian Kolfage, and other associates of We Build The Wall.”



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic journalistic standards.

Score: 34.5/100



Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)



Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)



Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)



Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)



Avoids deceptive headlines (10)



Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)



Clearly labels advertising (7.5)



Reveals who’s in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)



The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

[More information.](#)

Stockton said the warrant was executed while he and Lawrence were traveling through Nevada in an RV “as part of our work with America First Projects.” Stockton said that he and Lawrence received subpoenas to appear before a federal grand jury in New York.

“Jen and I have no comment on the specifics contained in the indictment and will only say that we intend to comply with the court’s order,” Stockton said. He did not explain his affiliation, if any, to We Build The Wall.

The site generates revenue from advertising and from user donations. The site linked to a “donate” page from a series of articles titled “Cutthroat Kamala,” about U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris, the Democratic vice presidential nominee in 2020. “Exposing Ruthless Kamala Harris: Support the America First Projects Investigation into Kamala Harris,” the page states, and invites readers to donate as much as \$2020.

Content

According to AmericaFirstProjects.com’s About page, the site’s goal is “to create content and programs that add value to the American dream for every American.” The site states that America First Projects aims to reach wide swathes of Americans: “Collectively we engage tens of millions across dozens of platforms every week. We create content and activism for the good of the American people,” the site’s About page notes.

The site primarily covers U.S. politics, with a focus on U.S. President Donald Trump, his critics in the Democratic Party, and social issues such as gun rights, LGBTQ issues, and race. America First Projects covers politics from a conservative, pro-Trump perspective. Its Facebook page describes the website as “Attack Dogs for President Trump’s America First Agenda.”

Typical headlines have included “Black football player will not kneel for the flag and has a strong message for those who do,” “Virginia Military Institute will not be removing Confederate statues: ‘We cannot eliminate our history nor do we desire to do so,’” and “CEO of Goya Foods doubles down against cancel culture; President Trump responds.”

The site also reposts articles, with attribution, from The Daily Caller News Foundation and The Associated Press.

Credibility

AmericaFirstProjects.com often summarizes or republishes excerpts of articles from conservative websites such as the Gateway Pundit, which NewsGuard has determined to repeatedly publish false content. Other stories rely entirely on social media posts as sources.

The website regularly publishes unproven claims, including about the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, a July 2020 article titled “Johns Hopkins and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation were planning for the coronavirus in October 2019” suggested that the Gates Foundation and Johns Hopkins University had advance knowledge of the [pandemic. “Now according to the information the first known case was in December of 2019. It also says that the first case they can find was in November of 2019. There is just one problem,” the article said. “Why was Johns Hopkins University partnering with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to study a pandemic like this in October?”

The Gates Foundation and the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security did co-host a pandemic preparedness exercise called Event 201 in October 2019. However, the scenario used in the exercise involved a fictional coronavirus with different characteristics than the COVID-19 virus. For example, in the center’s simulation, the virus originated on pig farms in Brazil, not in China.

“To be clear, the Center for Health Security and partners did not make a prediction during our tabletop exercise,” the center said in a January 2020 statement. “For the scenario, we modeled a fictional coronavirus pandemic, but we explicitly stated that it was not a prediction. Instead, the exercise served to highlight preparedness and response challenges that would likely arise in a very severe pandemic. We are not now predicting that the nCoV-2019 outbreak will kill 65

million people. Although our tabletop exercise included a mock novel coronavirus, the inputs we used for modeling the potential impact of that fictional virus are not similar to nCoV-2019.”

A May 2020 article titled “Personal Responsibility: Why America Doesn’t Need Bill Gates’ Microchip” claimed that “Bill Gates and his buddies want to track and control your every movement. They say that it’s so they can protect us from Covid-19 but in America we know better. Will you surrender your religious, privacy, speech, and health rights to stop the spread of Wuhan Coronavirus?” The article also said that Gates had created a “mark-of-the-beast microchip.”

Claims by AmericaFirstProjects.com that Gates seeks to microchip or otherwise track humans who have tested positive for COVID-19 appears to have misrepresented research funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. A study conducted by Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers used a vaccine delivery device that involved an ink, which is invisible to the naked eye but detectable with an infrared device, that aimed to allow health providers in developing countries to more easily track a child’s vaccinations. However, the ink could not be used as a tracking device. The research, which was published in 2019 before the COVID-19 virus first emerged, was not related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gates has denied funding or developing a vaccine with microchip surveillance technology in a June 3, 2020 media call. “I’ve never been involved in any sort of microchip-type thing,” he said.

An August 2020 article titled “Judge Forces Puberty Blockers On 7 Year Old Boy So A Woman Can Castrate Him” said that a Texas man named Jeffrey Younger “is the father of a young boy whose mom is trying to cut off his body parts. She’s trying to force her seven-year-old child to have gender reassignment surgery.”

Jeffrey Younger -- who was identified in the America First Projects article as Jeffrey Young -- has been in a custody dispute with his ex-wife over their now 8-year-old child, who was identified male at birth but now

identifies as a girl. The judge's August 2020 ruling gave the child's mother sole power to make medical decisions for the child. However, contrary to the claims made by America First Projects, the child's mother has not claimed to want to "cut off [the child's] body parts" or "force her seven-year-old child to have gender reassignment surgery." The child's mother has not expressed any plans to pursue surgery for her daughter. In addition, the Texas judge's decision did not require the child to take puberty-blocking drugs.

In addition to headlines in the articles cited above, AmericaFirstProjects.com has published headlines that do not accurately reflect articles' content.

For example, a June 2020 article headlined, "Major Democratic big business donor murders puppies," reported that a number of dog owners had claimed that Blue Buffalo, a General Mills-owned dog food brand, had sickened their pets. While the story did accurately report that General Mills Inc. had contributed more to Democratic candidates than Republicans, but contrary to the headline, the article did not claim that Blue Buffalo dog food had actually led to the death of any dogs.

Because AmericaFirstProjects.com has published misleading and unsubstantiated claims in articles and headlines, including about the COVID-19 pandemic, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not gather and present information responsibly and does not avoid the use of deceptive headlines.

The site does not list a corrections policy, and NewsGuard could not find any corrections on the site.

AmericaFirstProjects.com says on its About page, "We strive to be accurate and truthful but aren't insulting by claiming that we are unbiased. We are pro-America." However, this "pro-America" political perspective does not sufficiently disclose the site's conservative, pro-Trump perspective, which is reflected in its news coverage. For example, the website predominantly covered the presidential campaign of Democratic

nominee Joe Biden and vice presidential nominee U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris in a negative light, without including their perspective in articles.

An August 2020 article published after Biden chose Harris as his running mate, and labeled as “2020 Coverage,” said, “Kamala’s vicious rise to power has delivered her to a position only two other women have ever reached but Kamala’s nomination is no cause for other women to celebrate. The way she got there makes it clear that she’s no champion of anything but the blind ambition of Kamala Harris.”

A July 2020 article titled “Americans call to defund the United Nations after ‘human rights’ criticism over handling of Portland riots,” which was labeled as Politics, said, “The United Nations (U.N.) is largely funded by the United States but it consistently promotes hatred of America while shielding the world’s worst human rights violators. For the UN to promote the ridiculous claim that the government is kidnapping ‘peaceful protesters’ further highlights their dedication to the cause of controlling and destroying America.”

A July 2020 Politics article asked readers to write to President Trump and urge him not to extend amnesty to undocumented immigrants. The article, which included a letter to the president in its text, said, “Don’t be like the weaker Presidents who have come before you and try to put a band-aid on this issue. Keep fighting for America First.”

Because AmericaFirstProjects.com has injected opinionated language into news stories, and because its news coverage largely advances an undisclosed perspective, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

NewsGuard did not receive a response to two August 2020 emails sent to a general email address affiliated with the site inquiring about the content cited above, the website’s handling of news and opinion, and its lack of corrections.

ownership or sources of funding.

The site lists its senior staff, including its top editor, on an About page.

Articles generally include bylines, but no biographical or contact information is provided for writers, which does not meet NewsGuard's standards for identifying content creators.

Advertising is clearly distinguished from editorial content.

NewsGuard did not receive a response to two emails sent to the site regarding its failure to disclose ownership or provide information about content creators.

History

AmericaFirstProjects.com launched in July 2018 as a political satire website. In April 2020, the site switched from satire and began publishing conservative political content. The satirical articles remain on the site, and are labeled as such.

Michael Moates, the site's senior editor, also operates TheNarrativeTimes.org and DC-Chronicle.com, two websites that publish satirical articles primarily mocking Joe Biden.

Written by: [Gabby Deutch](#)

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: [Click Here](#)

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Ownership and Financing

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Content

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