

What's Wrong with Wikipedia?

By Joseph L. Bast
President, The Heartland Institute
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In recent months, left-wing activists have hijacked The Heartland Institute's profile at Wikipedia, removing objective descriptions of our programs and publications and replacing them with lies, errors, and outright libelous claims. Our efforts to correct the site have been rejected by the editors of the self-described "free encyclopedia." Can you help?

Here's the link to our profile: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Heartland_Institute

Supporters of Heartland will be surprised to learn that we "worked with the tobacco company Philip Morris to question or deny the health risks of secondhand smoke and to lobby against smoking bans," that we "support climate change denial," or that our decision to spin off our work on finance and insurance into the R Street Institute is characterized as the "resignation of almost the entire Heartland Washington D.C. office, taking the Institute's biggest project (on insurance) with it."

These are simply lies, meant to damage our reputation and effectiveness in the most important public policy debates facing the nation. But the editors of Wikipedia refuse to remove these libelous claims, and over time have allowed them to proliferate.

You can help! If you have experience editing Wikipedia articles, we especially need your help to restore fairness and objectivity to this article.

If you don't have an account at Wikipedia, click on "Create account" in the upper right corner. It will ask you to choose a username and enter a password. Putting in your email is optional, but will allow you to retrieve your password if you forgot it.

When you make a change, be incremental. And keep an eye on your changes. If it is "changed back," go to the "talk" area and convince the editors that your change is fair, objective, independent, and properly sourced.

A detailed critique of our Wikipedia profile appears below, but first consider these basic facts:

1. The Heartland Institute is an independent nonprofit research and education organization that addresses a wide range of topics, including school reform, budget and tax issues, health care reform, environmental protection, and constitutional reform. This profile ignores about 90% of what we do.
2. Heartland is highly regarded by its peers. We are endorsed

[<https://www.heartland.org/media-library/pdfs/Endorsements.pdf>] by scores of think tank leaders as well as elected officials and civic and business leaders. Like hundreds of other “think tanks” with profiles on Wikipedia, we take a conservative-libertarian perspective on issues. Nearly all the sources in our current profile are left-wing activists who object to our philosophy. How is that fair?

3. We enforce policies [<https://www.heartland.org/media-library/pdfs/DonorPolicies.pdf>] that limit the role donors may play in the selection of research topics, peer review, and publication plans of the organization. Heartland does not conduct contract research. These policies ensure that no Heartland researcher or spokesperson is subject to undue pressure from a donor.

4. The left hates our views on global warming [<https://www.heartland.org/issues/environment>], and tobacco control [<https://www.heartland.org/policy-documents/january-2006-leave-those-poor-smokers-alone>], but our positions are well-documented, endorsed by leading scholars, and widely shared by other think tanks and advocacy groups. Why has Wikipedia allowed left-wing activists to fill our profile with their hate speech on these topics?

5. We have replied [<https://www.heartland.org/reply-to-critics>], repeatedly, to all of the false claims and accusations that appear in the profile. None of our replies and efforts to set the record straight are reported in the Wikipedia profile.

Following is a line-by-line critique of the Wikipedia site as it stood on February 12. If you choose to go to our profile and try to make changes, some of the facts reported below may be useful in your effort. Jim Lakely, Heartland’s communication director, has the URLs of many third-party sources you can cite to document changes you suggest. He can be reached at 312/377-4000 or jlakely@heartland.org. Or just Google and find independent confirmation yourself... Heartland’s work has been reported fairly in thousands of published articles and websites. Remember that Wikipedia doesn’t want to cite anything on Heartland’s own website.

Requested Changes

1. The second sentence is libelous: “In the 1990s, the Heartland Institute worked with the tobacco company Philip Morris to question or deny the health risks of secondhand smoke and to lobby against smoking bans.” The source of this allegation is NOT a primary source and is not reliable. We did not “work with” Philip Morris, but only received funding from it, as did (and do) hundreds of other nonprofit organizations including those involved in debating smokers’ rights. We have policies in place that specifically prevent us from “working with” donors. (That document is linked in our “reply to critics” page.) We did not “lobby against smoking bans,” but only published research and commentary critical of smoking bans. This is not lobbying.

2. The third sentence is false: we do not support “climate change denial.” In fact, later in the profile, the first sentence under “Global Warming” correctly says Heartland “does not dispute that climate change itself is occurring. Rather, it says that human activities are not driving

climate change, the amount of climate change is not catastrophic, and might be beneficial, and that the economic costs of trying to mitigate climate change exceed the benefits.” We say this ALL THE TIME and it’s featured on our website. All of our work acknowledges that climate change exists and there is some small human impact. Our argument has always been that the human impact is small and action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is not supported by the science or economic analysis.

3. The next paragraph under the “History” subhead repeats the libelous statements of the opening sentences: “In the 1990s, Heartland worked with the tobacco company Philip Morris to question serious cancer risks to secondhand smoke, and to lobby against government public-health regulations.[2] Heartland never “worked with” Philip Morris” and does not lobby.

4. The following sentence reads, “Starting in 2008, Heartland has organized conferences to question the scientific opinion of global warming.[15][16],” It should read “Starting in 2008, Heartland has organized conferences featuring scientists and economists who say man-made global warming is not a crisis.” We contribute to the scientific debate and provide a platform for scientists to say man-made global warming is not a crisis. How is that “question[ing] scientific opinion on global warming”?

5. Under the “Policy Positions” subhead, the sentence that reads “The Institute promotes climate change denial,” should be revised to read “The Institute promotes debate on the causes and consequences of climate change.”

6. The next sentence begins, “In addition to lobbying activities...” We almost never lobby. It should read “In addition to producing its own research and commentary on these issues,”

7. Under the subhead “Tobacco Regulation,” this sentence is false: “One of Heartland’s first and most prominent campaigns was against tobacco regulation.” In fact, our first “campaigns” were to deregulate taxicabs, expand choice in education, reduce taxes in Illinois, and end subsidies to professional sports franchises. We published and spoke extensively on all these topics in the 1980s and 1990s (and still do) and have considerable impact. Our work on tobacco control has never amounted to more than a small fraction of our work.

8. The next sentence is an unsubstantiated opinion: “According to the Los Angeles Times, Heartland’s advocacy for the tobacco industry is one of the two things Heartland is most widely known for.” We publish very little on this subject, and are best known for our work on climate change, school reform, health care, and entitlement reform, where the lion’s share of our resources are devoted. The particular reporter who made this claim may know us “best” for this only because he opposes our views on tobacco control and climate change (the subject of his article). Otherwise, he has no way of knowing (and cites no surveys) how we are “most widely known.”

9. The next paragraph is entirely inaccurate and libelous:

“During the 1990s, the Heartland Institute worked with tobacco company Philip Morris to question the links between smoking, secondhand smoke and health risks.[2] Philip Morris commissioned Heartland to write and distribute reports. Heartland published a policy study which summarized a jointly prepared report by the Association of Private Enterprise Education and Philip Morris. The Heartland Institute also undertook a variety of other activities on behalf of the tobacco industry, including meeting with legislators, holding off-the-record briefings, and producing op-eds, radio interviews, and letters.”

We never “worked with” Philip Morris. See above. We do not do commissioned research, and Philip Morris never “commissioned us” to write a report. We never “jointly prepared a report” with Philip Morris (and I don’t think we ever did with APEE, which doesn’t do public policy research at all). We did not undertake any “activities on behalf of the tobacco industry.” See above.

10. Under the subhead “Global Warming,” the last sentence is wrong: “Fred Singer is the director of Heartland’s Science and Environmental Policy Project.” Fred Singer is an unpaid senior fellow (one of many), and SEPP is an independent organization with no formal affiliation with The Heartland Institute.

11. I’m surprised, under the “Budgetary” subhead, there is no mention of our publishing *Budget & Tax News* or Peter Ferrara’s book, *Power to the People*, in 2014.

12. I’m surprised, under the “Education” subhead, there is no mention of our publishing *School Reform News* and several books, including *We Can Rescue Our children* and *Education and Capitalism*, but am grateful to at least see *Rewards* there. Why isn’t the coauthor of that book, Dr. Herbert Walberg, identified?

13. I’m surprised, under the “Health Care” subhead, there is no mention of our publishing *Health Care News* or the books, *Why We Spend Too Much on Health Care* and *The Obamacare Disaster?*

14. I’m surprised, under “Hydraulic Fracturing,” none of the policy studies we’ve published on the issue are listed.

15. Under the subhead “NIPCC and Climate Change Reconsidered,” four volumes of research totaling nearly 4,000 pages is summarized as “The aggregated work of the NIPCC is known as “Climate Change Reconsidered.” Really? At least there should be a link to www.climatechangereconsidered.org. The text should read, “Heartland has published four volumes of research on climate change for NIPCC, totaling nearly 4,000 pages, in a series titled “Climate Change Reconsidered.” An analysis of the first volume in the series found it contained a higher percentage of citations to peer-reviewed journal articles than two of the IPCC’s massive assessment reports. [Source: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718514001389>, “Reviewing the climate change reviewers: Exploring controversy through report references and citations,” Ferenc

Jankóá, Norbert Móriczb, Judit Papp Vancsóá, *Geoforum*, Vol. 56, September 2014. The authors report 90.79% of source citations in *Climate Change Reconsidered: The 2009 Report of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC)* were to peer-reviewed journals, a higher percentage than was the case with the United Nations' IPCC Third and Fourth Assessment Reports. The authors found "the scientific background of the NIPCC report is quite similar to the IPCC report," and concluded, "when we take the contrarian arguments seriously, there is a chance to bring together the differing views and knowledge claims of the disputing 'interpretive communities.'" Of course, much more could be, and should be, said about CCR-II. Positive reviews and a bibliography listing more than 100 citations to CCR in peer-reviewed articles appear at <http://climatechangereconsidered.org/>.

16. Under the subhead "International Conferences on Climate Change," only left-wing critics are quoted commenting on them. These 11 conferences generated extensive and positive coverage by other sources, some of it reported here: <http://climateconferences.heartland.org/>. Balance requires that some of those reactions also be quoted.

17. Under the subhead "May 2012 billboard campaign," this sentence is false: "The advertising campaign led to the ... resignation of almost the entire Heartland Washington D.C. office, taking the Institute's biggest project (on insurance) with it. The staff of the former Heartland insurance project founded the R Street Institute and announced they "will not promote climate change skepticism." In fact, controversy over the billboard led to the decision to spin-off Heartland's 2-person Washington DC office into the R Street. The insurance project was the smallest and newest of our programs and losing money. Heartland was by far the R Street Institute's biggest financial supporter during its first year of existence.

18. The next paragraph begins, "Following the 2012 document leak and the controversial billboard campaign..." but there is no prior discussion of "the 2012 document leak." That now appears below. It should read "Following the theft of the organization's budget and other documents by Peter Gleick (see below)..."

19. In that same paragraph, it says, "According to the advocacy group Forecast the Facts, Heartland lost more than \$825,000, or one third of planned corporate fundraising for the year." That should be followed by this disclaimer: "The Heartland Institute says this number is grossly inflated since it assumes that every gift *it hoped to raise* from past and lapsed corporate donors would have been received in 2012. Its IRS 990s for the years 2011 and 2012 confirm that the organization's income rose in 2012, as any lost income was more than offset by new gifts from individuals and foundations."

20. The following sentence is just bizarre (naturally, since it cites the loathsome *Guardian* as a source): "The shortfall led to sponsorship of the Institute's May 2012 climate conference by Illinois' coal lobby, the Illinois Coal Association, the Institute's "first publicly acknowledged donations from the coal industry," and the Heritage Foundation." The Illinois Coal Association contributed \$500, a trivial sum, just to be listed among other cosponsor. The Heritage Foundation gave a similar amount and for the same purpose.

21. Under the subhead “June 2013 Chinese Academy of Science,” this sentence is false: “the Heartland Institute falsely announced that the Chinese Academy of Sciences supported their views, and said the publication placed significant scientific weight against climate change.” In fact, the news release quoted me saying “Publication of a Chinese translation of *Climate Change Reconsidered* by the Chinese Academy of Sciences indicates the country’s leaders believe their position is justified by science and not just economics.” That quotation, and its link, <https://www.heartland.org/press-releases/2013/06/11/chinese-academy-sciences-publishes-heartland-institute-research-skeptical->, ought to appear here, so readers can judge for themselves if this is a false claim or not.

22. Under the subhead “Funding,” the odd story about an op-ed defending Wal-Mart is rehashed. It says, “As of 2006, the Walton Family Foundation had contributed approximately \$300,000 to Heartland. The Institute published an op-ed in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* defending Wal-Mart against criticism over its treatment of workers.” It’s all very strange, because Heartland can’t “publish an op-ed in the *Louisville Courier-Journal*.” One of our 250 unpaid policy advisors submitted an op-ed the newspaper and the editor accepted it. The Walton Family Foundation was funding our work on school reform, not to defend to company. The author didn’t even know the foundation supported us. There was no conflict of interest and nothing to report.

23. The final sentence of this section repeats the line about “The Institute lost an estimated \$825,000, or one third of planned corporate fundraising for the year.[103]” It should be deleted if only because it is redundant, or should once again be accompanied by the disclaimer: “The Heartland Institute says this number is grossly inflated since it assumes that every gift it hoped to raise from past and lapsed corporate donors would have been received in 2012. Its IRS 990s for 2011 and 2012 confirm that the organization’s income rose in 2012, as any lost income was more than offset by new gifts from individuals and foundations.”

24. Under the subhead “2012 documents incident,” the last sentence is false: “Gleick was later reinstated to the Pacific Institute after an investigation found that the documents were authentic and none were forged.[147]” The results of the investigation were never made public, it is unknown if it actually examined the documents involved, and it certainly never found that “none [of the documents] were forged.” In fact, extensive evidence has been presented that the “strategy document” was in fact forged, and that conclusion has never been rebutted by Gleick. This should be struck.

25. The list of “books” is remarkably incomplete. Why is it missing nearly 30 titles? Here is a list of the 33 books published by The Heartland Institute, in chronological order:

Herbert J. Walberg, Joseph Bast, Steven Baer, and Michael Bakalis, *We Can Rescue Our Children* (Ottawa, IL: Green Hill Publishers, 1988).

Joseph L. Bast and Diane C. Bast, coauthors and coeditors, *Coming Out of the Ice: A Plan to Make the 1990s Illinois’ Decade* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 1990).

Joseph L. Bast and Diane C. Bast, coauthors and coeditors, *Rebuilding America's Schools* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 1991).

Joseph L. Bast, Richard C. Rue and Stuart A. Wesbury, *Why We Spend Too Much on Health Care* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 1992 (rev. ed., 1993)).

Joseph L. Bast, Richard C. Rue and Peter J. Hill, *Eco-Sanity: A Common-Sense Guide to Environmentalism* (Lathrop, MD: Madison Books, 1994 (revised paperback edition, 1996)).

Robert J. Genetski, *A Nation of Millionaires: Unleashing America's Economic Potential* (Palatine, IL: The Heartland Institute, 1997).

David B. Kopel, *Antitrust after Microsoft: The Obsolescence of Antitrust in the Digital Era* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2001).

Herbert Walberg and Joseph L. Bast, *Education & Capitalism* (Hoover Institution Press, 2003).

Joseph L. Bast and Diane C. Bast, coauthors and coeditors, *What's Wrong with Importing Drugs from Canada?* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2003).

Lee H. Walker, *The Conscience of Black Conservatives* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2004).

Joseph L. Bast and Dennis Byrne, coeditors, *Emerging Issues 2005* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2005).

Herbert Walberg and Joseph L. Bast, *Let's Put Parents Back in Charge!* (Chicago: Heartland Institute, 2003; bilingual edition 2005).

Kenneth E. Thorpe and John C. Goodman, *Reforming the Health Care System* (Ball State University and The Heartland Institute, 2005).

Conrad Meier, *Destroying Health Insurance Markets* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2005).

Diane C. Bast and Michael Van Winkle, coeditors, *Emerging Issues 2006* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2006).

Joseph L. Bast, *Please Don't Poop in My Salad (and other essays opposing the war against smoking)* (Chicago, The Heartland Institute, 2006).

S. Fred Singer and Dennis Avery, *Unstoppable Global Warming – Every 1,500 Years*, second revised edition (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

Diane C. Bast and S. T. Karnick, coeditors, *Emerging Issues 2007* (Chicago: The Heartland

Institute, 2007).

Roy Innis, *Energy Keepers – Energy Killers: The New Civil Rights Battle*, second revised edition (Merril Press, 2008).

Lee H. Walker, *Booker T. Washington: A Re-Examination* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2008).

Craig Idso and S. Fred Singer, *Climate Change Reconsidered: The 2009 Report of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2009). Special editions published in India in 2011 and translated and published by the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 2013.

Bart Madden, *Free To Choose Medicine* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2010).

Peter Ferraro, *The Obamacare Disaster* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2010).

Craig Idso, Robert Carter, and S. Fred Singer, *Climate Change Reconsidered: The 2011 Interim Report* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2011).

Herbert Walberg and Joseph L. Bast, coauthors and coeditors, *The Patriot's Toolbox* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2010, rev. ed. 2011).

Rael Isaac, *Roosters of the Apocalypse* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2012).

Craig Idso, Robert Carter, and S. Fred Singer, *Climate Change Reconsidered II: Physical Science* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2013).

Herbert Walberg and Joseph L. Bast, *Rewards: How to use rewards to help children learn and why teachers don't use them well* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2014).

Craig Idso, Robert Carter, and S. Fred Singer, *Climate Change Reconsidered II: Biological Impacts* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2014).

Peter Ferrara, *Power to the People: The New Road to Freedom and Prosperity for the Poor, Seniors, and Those Most in Need of the World's Best Health Care* (Chicago: The Heartland Institute, 2014).

Sebastian Lüning and Fritz Vahrenholt, *The Neglected Sun: Why the Sun Precludes Climate Catastrophe*, second edition (Chicago, IL: The Heartland Institute, 2015).

Craig Idso, Robert Carter, and S. Fred Singer, *Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming* (Arlington Heights, IL: The Heartland Institute, 2015).