

A website that often breaks news about U.S. politics and elections, and publishes the well-known “Playbook,” a daily newsletter for and about Washington insiders.



This website adheres to all nine of NewsGuard's standards of credibility and transparency.

**Score: 100/100**

## Ownership and Financing

Politico is owned by Robert Allbritton, the website’s co-founder, executive chairman, and publisher, through the private Capitol News Company, LLC and its subsidiary, Politico LLC. The website is headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, with additional offices across the U.S. and Europe.

Capitol News Company also jointly owns Politico Europe, the brand’s European counterpart, with German publishing house Axel Springer. In addition to his role at Capitol News Company, Allbritton is the co-founder and executive chairman of Perpetual Capital Partners, a private investment group based in Washington.

Politico generates revenue through advertisements, subscriptions to a print edition that comes out three times a week when Congress is in session, a bimonthly print magazine, and subscriptions to separate public policy sites targeted at various industries, such as transportation, health care, and technology, under the Politico Pro label. According to a December 2018 article in Vanity Fair, Politico Pro subscriptions accounted for more than 50 percent of Politico’s revenue.

- ✓ 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.](#)

## Content

Politico focuses on breaking news about politics and policy, and is often first to report multiple scoops a day on topics of relevance to those who work within and with the federal government. As described on its About Us page, the site aims “to be the dominant source for politics and policy in power centers across every continent where access to reliable information, nonpartisan journalism and real-time tools creates, informs and engages a global citizenry.”

Typical stories include behind-the-scenes views on maneuvers within the White House, Congress, and political campaigns, as well as deeper dives into specific legislative areas such as agriculture, health care, and technology. Typical headlines on the site include “Kellyanne Conway says more officials may be ousted after Trump’s Senate acquittal;” “Republican Senate Budget Committee chair won’t hold hearing on Trump budget;” and “Why employers are flirting with the public option.”

Politico's newsletters are archived on the site. "Playbook," billed as a "must-read briefing on what's driving the day in Washington," is an early-morning summary that is often a first read for media and political power brokers. The newsletters also report on media newsmakers, as well as birthdays and weddings of political or media figures. Playbook publishes an afternoon edition and other versions for six states and Europe.

The site also publishes articles from Politico Magazine, which appears in print every two months, and international coverage from its Politico Europe brand, as well as opinion columns. A section called The Agenda focuses on policy. Politico also produces eight podcasts on topics such as politics, money, and energy.

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## Credibility

Politico's reporting is balanced and fact-based, frequently citing firsthand interviews, official documents, and other credible sources. Headlines accurately represent content.

The site's reporting has had an impact. In March 2019, it reported on a \$2.25 million contract approved by U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma, which was used to hire contractors who helped polish her public image, among other communications work. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services halted the contract the next month, after facing widespread criticism. In January 2018, Politico reported that the director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Barbara Fitzgerald, had bought shares in a tobacco company, leading to her resignation a day later.

A 2017 Politico investigation into the use of charter flights by U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price led to his resignation. Earlier in the year, Andrew Puzder, a nominee for U.S. Labor Secretary, withdrew after Politico obtained video of his ex-wife alleging Puzder abused her.

Matt Wuerker, Politico's staff cartoonist and illustrator, won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in editorial cartooning and was a finalist in the same category in 2009 and 2010. The White House Correspondents' Association awarded its Merriman Smith Award for presidential coverage to Politico in 2017 and 2018.

In 2019, Michael Kruse, a senior staff writer for Politico, won the National Press Foundation's Everett McKinley Dirksen Award for Distinguished Reporting of Congress, for his series on U.S. Representative Mikie Sherrill, a newly-elected moderate Democrat.

Politico says on its About page that it publishes “nonpartisan journalism.” A 2012 study by Comscore, a media analytics company, found that 29 percent of Politico’s readers identified as Democrats, while the same percentage identified as Republicans. Opinion content, which is published throughout the site, is clearly labeled. Articles published by Politico Magazine that are not labeled as opinion often make authoritative statements in their political analysis.

Politico posts corrections and clarifications to its stories, with the changes disclosed at the bottom of the corrected article. It also corrects mistakes made in the archived editions of its emailed newsletters.

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## Transparency

Politico clearly discloses its ownership by Robert Allbritton in Allbritton’s biography, although the site does not mention Capitol News Company and only references Politico LLC in copyright language and on the site’s Terms of Service and Privacy Policy pages. However, because Allbritton’s role is clearly disclosed and he is the sole owner of the corporations that own Politico, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not fall short of its standard for disclosing ownership.

An About Us page lists Politico’s editorial leadership and other executives, along with their biographies. Users can contact Politico through a general form on a Feedback page.

Politico’s articles are generally attributed to authors and link to the writer’s biography, which includes their Twitter profile. Politico Magazine articles include a short biography under the author’s name. Archived versions of the site’s newsletters also name their authors and provide biographies for their writers.

Politico will sometimes go beyond typical transparency standards by discussing its reporting process for major stories. For example, it published a story on how it followed up on a tip about Price’s use of charter flights, which eventually led to his resignation as Department of Health and Human Services secretary.

Advertisements and sponsored content are distinguishable from editorial content.

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## History

Politico was launched in 2007 as The Politico by Allbritton and two Washington Post staffers — national politics editor John Harris and White House correspondent Jim VandeHei. The website was initially part of the Allbritton Communications Company, of which Allbritton was CEO, until that company sold its television stations to Sinclair Broadcast Group in 2014.

Politico Pro, the subscription service offering industry-specific policy sites, began in 2010. Politico Magazine launched in 2013. That same year, the company began its expansion into state political news with the purchase of Capital New York, now known as Politico New York.

In 2016, VandeHei, along with Mike Allen, the original author of “Playbook,” left Politico to launch the news site Axios.

*Editor’s Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on Feb. 13, 2020.*

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

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