

NPR protests as Twitter calls it 'state-affiliated media'

April 6 2023, by David Bauder



The headquarters for National Public Radio (NPR) stands on North Capitol Street on April 15, 2013, in Washington. Twitter has labeled National Public Radio (NPR) as “state-affiliated media” on the social media site Wednesday, April 5, 2023, a move some worried could undermine public confidence in the news organization. Credit: AP Photo/Charles Dharapak, File

Twitter has labeled National Public Radio as "state-affiliated media" [on the social media site](#), a move some worried Wednesday could undermine public confidence in the news organization.

NPR said it was disturbed to see the description added to all of the tweets that it sends out, with John Lansing, its president and CEO, calling it "unacceptable for Twitter to label us this way."

It was unclear why Twitter made the move. Twitter's owner, Elon Musk, quoted a definition of state-affiliated media in the company's guidelines as "outlets where the state exercises control over editorial content through [financial resources](#), direct or indirect political pressures, and/or control over production and distribution."

"Seems accurate," Musk tweeted in a reply to NPR.

NPR does receive U.S. government funding through grants from federal agencies and departments, along with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The company said it accounts for less than 1% of NPR's annual operating budget. But until Wednesday, the same Twitter guidelines said that "state-financed media organizations with editorial independence, like the BBC in the UK or NPR in the United States, are not defined as state-affiliated media for the purposes of this policy."



A Twitter logo hangs outside the company's offices in San Francisco, on Dec. 19, 2022. Twitter has labeled National Public Radio (NPR) as “state-affiliated media” on the social media site Wednesday, April 5, 2023, a move some worried could undermine public confidence in the news organization. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, File

NPR has now been removed from that sentence on Twitter's website.

Asked for comment, Twitter's press office responded with an automated poop emoji.

The move came just days after Twitter [stripped The New York Times](#) of its [verification check mark](#).

"NPR and our member stations are supported by millions of listeners who depend on us for the independent, fact-based journalism we provide," Lansing said. "NPR stands for freedom of speech and holding the powerful accountable."

The literary organization PEN America, in calling for Twitter to reverse the move, underlined that NPR "assiduously maintains editorial independence."

Liz Woolery, PEN America's digital policy leader, said Twitter's decision was "a dangerous move that could further undermine [public confidence](#) in reliable news sources."

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