



Trans Journalists Association

On Updating Trans Journalists' Bylines

In recent weeks, there have been ongoing conversations about whether it is appropriate to retroactively change a trans journalist's byline once they have come out. We, the Trans Journalists Association, charge that it's inappropriate not to retroactively change a trans journalist's byline when that is what the journalist in question requests. We strongly urge newsrooms and media organizations to change a trans journalist's byline to reflect their lived experience without issuing a correction or a disclaimer.

Transgender people face workplace discrimination at a higher rate than the average population—more than one in four transgender people have lost a job due to bias, and more than three-fourths have experienced some form of workplace discrimination according to the National Center for Transgender Equality. This discrimination is much of the reason there are so few out trans journalists with full-time jobs in media.

Changing bylines retroactively would allow trans journalists to take credit for their work without outing themselves in the process. Adding any sort of disclaimer, even one that does not include the author's deadname, has the potential to out the journalist in question. This could open the reporter up to harassment in the workplace and online that is completely avoidable.

Updating an author's byline without a disclaimer would not negatively impact the credibility of the reporting, nor the integrity of the media organization updating the byline, in any way. It, however, does clarify to readers who the author is, and thus makes them more accessible.

On the other hand, issuing a "correction" when updating a trans reporter's byline or refusing to update a trans reporter's byline does negatively impact a media organization's credibility. It sends a strong message that a newsroom is not a safe place for transgender people. Additionally, taking a stand against updating the bylines of trans reporters signals to trans sources that their stories are less likely to be covered fairly. We strongly urge newsrooms with these policies to reconsider.