How far will The Union go for a paid ad?

December 7, 2015

Dave Barnett

In a recent letter to the editor, Herb Lindberg characterized Frank Pinney’s ad as “free speech.”

Does “free speech” make it okay to spout hate speech, lies, libel, and slander? Are there no standards or limits? Doesn’t The Union have an obligation to vet what is published, not for political correctness, but for appropriateness and journalistic ethics? Or, does The Union blindly accept anything, no matter how untrue or derogatory, as long as it is a paid ad?

Herb Lindberg asserted that Frank Pinney’s comments were “logical” and “well-researched.” However, even a modest amount of research demonstrates that Pinney’s comments are a mindless repetition of standardized “sound bites” generated by the PR firms paid by fossil fuel to create uncertainty (a complete list of the fallacious “talking points” used by Pinney can be found at [http://www.SkepticalScience.com.)](http://www.skepticalscience.com/) All Frank Pinney did was cut and paste a list of ideologically motivated phrases, not supported by any evidence, but deemed to be politically correct by the right-wing anti-science crowd. No thought required.

If that is the best summary on the topic that Herb Lindberg has seen, he hasn’t looked very far.

David Barnett

Grass Valley