



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 8, 2020

New York Times Opinion Editor Fired for Publishing Article by a Republican Senator

New York Times opinion editor James Bennet [was fired on Sunday. He didn't resign](#). In a meeting with *Times* publisher A.G. Sulzberger following the brouhaha that erupted after an opinion piece by Republican Senator Tom Cotton's was published on Wednesday, Bennet knew there was only one vote in the room, and it wasn't his.

Cotton's opinion piece, "Send in the Troops," was well-written and reasonable, as *The New American* reported at the time. Only as a last resort, wrote Cotton, should the president consider using the Insurrection Act of 1807 to quell the Antifa-infested riots if local and state law-enforcement agencies were unable to.

Bennet defended publishing Cotton's letter even though disagreed with it: "It would undermine the integrity and independence of The New York Times if we only published views that editors like me agreed with, and it would betray what I think is our fundamental purpose: not to tell you what to think but to help you think for yourself."

Initially Bennet got some support from Sulzberger. On Thursday morning, the *Times'* publisher wrote: "I believe in the principle of openness to a range of opinions, even those we may disagree with, and this piece was published in that spirit."

And then he waffled: "But it's essential that we listen to and reflect on the concerns we're hearing, as we would with any piece that is the subject of significant criticism. I will do so with an open mind."

By Thursday night he had closed his mind, sending a message to his employees that "a rushed editorial process" had led to the publication of Cotton's op-ed "that did not meet our standards."

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On Friday, Bennet tried to rescue himself by explaining in an all-staff virtual meeting that Cotton's article shouldn't have been published after all; that it contained "factual inaccuracies" and had a "needlessly harsh" tone. Said Bennet: "[Cotton's] essay fell short of our standards and should not have been published."

It was too late. The *Times'* announcement on Sunday merely confirmed it. Sulzberger wrote in a note to his staff, "Last week we saw a significant breakdown in our editing process, not the first we've experienced in recent years." Following Sunday's meeting, Sulzberger ended Bennet's budding career (he had been widely considered to take over the position as the paper's executive editor) with a flourish: "Both of us concluded that James would not be able to lead the team through the next leg of change that is required."





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We noted in our initial coverage of the incident, “It’s likely that op-eds such as Cotton’s, supporting the president, will remain rare at the *Times*.” Katie Kingsbury, who is taking Bennet’s place, made sure of it. On Sunday she told her staff that if anyone sees “any piece of Opinion journalism — including headlines or social posts or photos or you name it — that gives you the slightest pause, please call or text me immediately.”

Cliff Levy, the *Times*’ associate managing editor, issued a staggering denial of the politically correct censorship that is firmly now in place at the *Times*. He tweeted: “The NY Times is committed to helping people understand a wide range of voices in the public debate. That role is as important as it’s ever been. The decision to [fire Bennet] has nothing to do with our belief in that mission, which remains a core principle.”

Tom Cotton, the Republican Senator from Arkansas who penned the offensive op-ed, sharply criticized the *Times*:

The New York Times editorial page editor and owner defended it in public statements but then they totally surrendered to a woke child mob from their own newsroom that apparently gets triggered if they’re presented with any opinion contrary to their own, as opposed to telling the woke children in their newsroom this is the workplace, not a social-justice seminar on campus.

Alex Berenson used to work as a reporter at the *New York Times* but now writes for Fox News. He wrote:

Though I never worked on the opinion page, I believed in its core mission: to encourage discussion and debate, even when those views might be uncomfortable to some. Bennet ... believed in those values too ... [but on] Sunday the Times has stood up for a different set of values: the values of conformity and groupthink and stifling dissent.”

This should finally, completely, and permanently settle the issue once and for all about what has appeared on the *Times*’ masthead for decades: “All the News That’s Fit to Print.” From now on, it will publish only the news that fits its ideological slant.

Image: designer491/iStock/Getty Images Plus

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