



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 15, 2020

Post Peddles One-sided Chinese Virus Tale About S.D. Governor, Omits Key Facts

“I don’t believe the [Washington] *Post*” didn’t become a slogan during the Reagan years for no reason, and going on four decades later, its coverage of the Chinese Virus pandemic in South Dakota shows that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

In presenting a one-sided picture of the situation there, the newspaper not only proved how effective lying by omission can be, but also that its principal obsession these days is electing Joe Biden to the presidency.



That is [Powerline blogger John Hinderaker’s assessment](#) of the *Post*’s latest anti-GOP smear job.

The Latest

[Yesterday’s piece in the *Post* carried](#) this tendentious headline: “South Dakota’s governor resisted ordering people to stay home. Now it has one of the nation’s largest coronavirus hot spots.”

Governor Kristi Noem is what the Left calls a “denier,” the *Post* would have readers believe:

As governors across the country fell into line in recent weeks, South Dakota’s top elected leader stood firm: There would be no statewide order to stay home.

Such edicts to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus, Gov. Kristi L. Noem said disparagingly, reflected a “herd mentality.” It was up to individuals — not government — to decide whether “to exercise their right to work, to worship and to play. Or to even stay at home.”

And besides, the first-term Republican told reporters at a briefing this month, “South Dakota is not New York City.”

But now South Dakota is home to one of the largest single coronavirus clusters anywhere in the United States, with more than 300 workers at a giant pork-processing plant falling ill. With the case numbers continuing to spike, the company was forced to announce the indefinite closure of the facility Sunday, threatening the U.S. food supply.

“The entire point of the article,” [Hinderaker correctly wrote](#), “is that the Smithfield experience proves Governor Noem was wrong not to order a mass closure of businesses.”

The problem? The article contradicts itself and omits salient facts that falsify the article’s premise — Noem is a science-denying idiot like President Trump.

The Smithfield plant remained open because the federal government deemed it “essential,” and so its “experience [with the Asian pathogen] had nothing to do with Noem’s policy,” [Hinderaker explained](#).

The newspaper suggested that Noem’s virus policies failed, but “strikingly absent from the *Post*’s hit job, however, is the bottom line: how many South Dakotans have actually succumbed to COVID-19? [The answer: 6](#), and none have been reported within the last week.”



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The *Post* also neglected to detail Smithfield's herculean effort to protect its employees, who produce "18 million servings of bacon, pork chops, etc., per day," a key reason it is considered an "essential" business.

[Wrote Hinderaker:](#)

The *Post* article conveyed the impression that the Smithfield plant might become a ghost facility, closed forever due to South Dakota's failure to elect a Democratic governor. In fact, the plant will reopen in a matter of days. During the brief time it has been closed, Smithfield has been working intensively with the Centers for Disease Control, OSHA, and others, and is implementing measures as described by the company.

How quickly the plant will reopen remains to be seen, but that aside, those measures [include the following](#):

Smithfield has instituted a series of stringent and detailed processes and protocols ... to effectively manage COVID-19 cases in its operations. These include mandatory 14-day COVID-19 related quarantines with pay as an uncompromising effort to protect its dedicated employees. The company has also relaxed attendance policies to eliminate any punitive effect for missing work due to COVID-19.... Smithfield is taking many measures to minimize its team members' risks of contracting COVID-19. These include adding extra hand sanitizing stations, boosting personal protective equipment, continuing to stress the importance of personal hygiene, enhancing cleaning and disinfection, expanding employee health benefits, implementing thermal scanning, increasing social distancing, installing plexiglass and other physical barriers and restricting all nonessential visitors.

FDA OK'd Drug

Not satisfied with omitting those facts, the governor announced "trials of a drug that President Trump has repeatedly touted as a potential breakthrough in the fight against the coronavirus, despite a lack of scientific evidence," the *Post* claimed.

That claim — "scientific evidence" does not support using the drug — is false. On March 28 in an eight-page letter, the [Food and Drug Administration approved](#) using chloroquine, a malaria drug, to treat the virus.

"Based on the totality of scientific evidence available to FDA, it is reasonable to believe that chloroquine phosphate and hydroxychloroquine sulfate may be effective in treating COVID-19," the chief scientist at FDA wrote.

Yet another missing fact uncongenial to the *Post's* narrative is this: "Hydroxychloroquine was overall chosen as the most effective therapy amongst COVID-19 treaters from a list of 15 options (37% of COVID-19 treaters)," [showed a 6,200-physician study](#).

"*The Washington Post* tells us none of this, for obvious reasons," [Hinderaker concluded](#). "It is called science, and liberals hate it."

Indeed. And that's an obvious reason not to believe the *Post* today any more than 40 years ago.



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R. Cort Kirkwood is a long-time contributor to The New American and a former newspaper editor.



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