

PolitiFact names 'death panels' the Lie of the Year

WASHINGTON – Dec. 18, 2009 – PolitiFact.com, the Pulitzer Prize-winning fact-checking Web site of the St. Petersburg Times, has named Sarah Palin's claim about "death panels" the 2009 Lie of the Year.

The editors and reporters of PolitiFact chose the death panels claim from eight finalists that included other prominent claims rated “False” or “Pants on Fire” on by the Truth-O-Meter. The finalists included President Barack Obama's claim that preventive health care saves money, Vice President Joe Biden's claim that “when one person sneezes, it goes all the way through the aircraft,” and conservative talk show host Glenn Beck's claim that President Obama's science adviser supported forced abortions and sterilants in drinking water.

“Death panels” was also the top choice in a survey of PolitiFact readers. More than 60 percent chose it as the Lie of the Year.

Palin's claim was one of 155 that earned a False or Pants on Fire rating on PolitiFact's Truth-O-Meter. The False and Pants on Fire items accounted for 36 percent of the 428 claims PolitiFact examined during the year.

“We had plenty of falsehoods to choose from,” said Bill Adair, editor of PolitiFact and Washington Bureau Chief of the St. Petersburg Times. “Our Truth-O-Meter was working overtime to keep up with all the misstatements.”

About PolitiFact

PolitiFact.com was launched in 2007 to fact-check the presidential campaign. In 2009, the site began fact-checking pundits and talk show hosts and a new feature, the Obameter, was added to track President Obama's 500-plus campaign promises. It has received numerous awards, including the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting.

The site is a product of the *St. Petersburg Times*, Florida's largest newspaper with an average circulation of has an average circulation of 370,050 Sunday and 270,147 daily (ABC publisher's statement 9/27/09). Considered one of the top ten newspapers in the country, the newspaper has eight Pulitzer Prizes to its name, including two 2009 Pulitzer Prizes.

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