

Election Meddling?: One writer worries about the K-Pop TikTok campaign



Dear C and Dr. B;

I can't say I was upset when the POTUS got poor attendance at his Big Rally, but when I found out that one reason for it was a prank played by Korean K-Pop teens using the TikTok app, I was a bit disturbed. It turns out that not only did the K-Pop teens submit hundreds of fake registrations for the rally, they encouraged all their fans in the US to do the same. Every person who registered then did a no show, which effectively thinned the crowd.

I'd like to see Trump lose as much as the next Democrat, but what bothers me about this is that it has a tinge of "interference by foreign governments." I'm pretty sure that the K-Pop stars are influenced to a great extent by the companies that own their contracts. I don't know why Korean teen stars would want to get American fans involved in a political agenda for reasons of their own. My teenaged daughter has the TikTok app. Do I have to be worried now that foreign corporations with political interests are brainwashing her? Is this what elections are going to be like from now on? They were a big enough circus before, but now they seem to be so filled with potential corruption that it scares me.

Nora Done

Dr. B says: I also have mixed feelings over this. On one hand I am overjoyed that the younger population got involved and made a difference. This was very empowering for them. On the other hand, I did hear an NPR story regarding K-Pop stars that mentioned that they have a high suicide rate, as they are allowed no free will. It seems like even their farts are under contract. There is nothing they say that isn't controlled and doesn't benefit their contract holders, so I think this shows that South Korea is messing with our politics. It also shows how much influence South Korea has over our kids' minds through electronic media. This is really worrisome.

I am not sure what, if anything, we can do about it either. I talked to my own teenage daughter about this and it didn't seem to enlighten her even a bit. As she says to everything, "I know, I got this!" She doesn't and doesn't.

C says: I can see where the Trump rally fiasco might seem like a great triumph to the K-Pop fan base and others. After all, if we can trust the fact checks, Trump made a habit of lying and playing dirty pool long before he got into office. It seems only fair that his own game be turned on him. Truth be told, the failure of the Republican convention was one of the few political skits that I enjoyed all the way through. But you are right - it bothered me that part of it was manipulated. I'd like to think that what I was seeing was The Truth.

Apparently, the media and the times are straining to turn the upcoming election into an ongoing game, and it doesn't matter what you do as long as you win. It's a type of competition that is dangerous during a global pandemic. The infections and death rates from COVID-19 are resurging across the country, and

a big factor in our failure to contain the spread of the virus is the lack of trust we have in our leaders. We were given messages from our scientific experts, only to have that information refuted or skewed to a surrealistic extent by the POTUS. As a result, no one was certain who to trust, but that didn't stop them from asserting their individual rights. Even now, as the numbers grow, millions of Americans (encouraged by Trump's own lack of protective gear) are deliberately exposing themselves and others to the COVID-19 viral spread, calling protective masks yokes of oppression and "Fascist Muzzles." They see legislation mandating masks as a violation of their personal freedom and send death threats to political leaders who try to enforce safety measures. I fear the damage from Trump's legacy of lies is something we will continue to grapple with into the future, no matter who wins - Trump didn't create this national bad attitude, he just fanned the flames.

It's important to understand why this trend to manipulate truth for convenience is a serious problem. Sometimes, the truth is a matter of life and death. Viruses don't care about anyone's political agenda, and we need to be able to trust what we hear. If you want to see what can happen when people believe internet misinformation, just watch this CNN video: [cnn.com/videos/politics/2020/06/24/mask-mandate-florida-anger-erupts-coronavirus-vpx.cnn](https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2020/06/24/mask-mandate-florida-anger-erupts-coronavirus-vpx.cnn). The countries that have most successfully contained the coronavirus spread are the ones where the leaders supported the scientific methods of experts and gave citizens information they could trust. The health of our nation can only be rebuilt with integrity. K-Pop's TikTok games are not going to do it.

You can visit Dr. B's blog at drbrilliantclique.wordpress.com