

# MEDIA FAIRNESS CAUCUS

## A Look at Media Bias

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### PolitiFact Creates Their Own Facts

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Thomas Bruscino, author and assistant professor of history at the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, was contacted by Louis Jacobson of PolitiFact in order to “throw a new military-related PolitiFact fact-check your way” based on a statement made by a Republican. **Despite Mr. Bruscino stating that the statement was “factually correct,” PolitiFact still gave this a “Pants on Fire” designation.**

From the folks at *Big Journalism* and *Big Tent*...

“Bruscino concludes: Jacobson did a remarkable bit of research in a very short period of time. However, I did think his questions to me were leading. Remember, Mr. Jacobson asked “(2) What context does this ignore (changing/more lethal technology, changed geopolitical needs, etc)?,” which both assumes and implies to the interviewees that...[the statement on military size and readiness] ignored those specific contexts.

Additionally, in his final few paragraphs, Jacobson refers to....the statements as “meaningless,” “glib,” “preposterous,” and “ridiculous.” To be frank, I’m a little surprised by that wording, especially in writing for a site that strives for objectivity. My opinion, for what it is worth, is that since [the] base statement was factually accurate when it came to most numerical metrics, it would.... be given credit for a half-truth, even if the context complicates the matter. In any event, that is how PolitiFact worked in this case. Just in case you are interested.”

### Buffet’s Secretary Not Symbol of Economic Injustice

From *Forbes*...

“Warren Buffett’s secretary, Debbie Bosanek, served as a stage prop for President Obama’s State of the Union speech. She was the president’s chief display of the alleged unfairness of our tax system – a little person paying a higher tax rate than her billionaire boss. **Bosanek’s prominent role in Obama’s “fairness” campaign piqued my curiosity, and I imagine the curiosity of others. How much does her boss pay this downtrodden woman?** So far, no one has volunteered this information.

We can get an approximate answer by consulting IRS data on tax rates by adjusted gross income, which would approximate her salary, assuming she does not have significant dividend, interest or capital-gains income (like her boss)...So I assume the tax rate Obama refers to is from her own earnings....The IRS publishes detailed tax tables by income level...They show that taxpayers earning an adjusted gross income between \$100,000 and \$200,000 pay an average rate of twelve percent....Therefore Buffett **must pay Bosanke a salary above two hundred thousand.**

We must wait for further details to learn how much more than \$200,000 she earns. The tax tables tell us about average ranges. For all we know she earns closer to a half million each year, but that is pure speculation. **I have nothing against Bosanke earning a half million or even more. Buffett is a major player in the world economy. His secretary deserves good compensation. At her income, however, she is scarcely the symbol of injustice that Obama wishes her to project. I imagine that there are any number of secretaries who would want her job and her place in the Congress gallery for the President’s State of the Union address.”**

### CNN Coddles Hacker Group ‘Anonymous’

From *NewsBusters.org*...

“The internet group ‘Anonymous’ claimed to have shut down the websites of the Justice Department and FBI, but that didn’t stop CNN’s Amber Lyon from giving them the soft treatment. Her Friday report on the group of hackers and thieves contained no voices of opposition but allowed the group to defend its escapades.

**Lyon remained neutral on the group’s tactics, from reporting their ‘favorite weapon’ of web attacks to asking how long it took them to crash the Justice Department website. And Lyon also gave members a chance to refute labels of the group as ‘terrorists’ and ‘hackers on steroids.’** She asked one member why he was laughing at the caricatures, and even added that ‘you’ve heard this, I’m sure, thousands of times’.

The man answered that a ‘vast number’ of the group’s members are not hackers – echoing Lyon’s earlier assessment of them as mostly ‘average Joe Americans’.”

*Distributed by Congressman Lamar Smith. For regular e-mail updates, please visit <http://lamarsmith.house.gov>  
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