

MEDIA FAIRNESS CAUCUS

A Look at Media Bias

Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX), Chairman

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Newspapers Win Lap Dog Award for Biased Columns 3/9/11



The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, and USA Today are the winners of this week's Media Fairness Caucus "Lap Dog Award" for biased news coverage.

Most of the regular columns in these newspapers have a left-wing bias. **Combined, they feature a total of 19 columnists who show a liberal perspective in their articles and only four who regularly offer conservative views. That's a ratio of almost five to one, liberal to conservative.**

It's no surprise that the great majority of Americans say the media are too liberal rather than too conservative, according to a recent Gallup public opinion poll. Columnists certainly are entitled to their opinions, but I hope the national media will look for opportunities to give Americans more balanced commentaries.

Networks Ignore Journalists' Code of Ethics

The Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics states "Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity." The three television networks have not adhered to those principles in recent weeks, according to a recent analysis by the Culture and Media Institute:

"From Feb. 1 through March 6, the three networks distinguished themselves by devoting 20 times more broadcast time to Charlie Sheen's [scandal] than to the Planned Parenthood video scandal and the subsequent vote in the House of Representatives to defund the organization.

"ABC, CBS and NBC aired, on 38 separate broadcasts, at least 4 hours, 51 minutes and 1 second of Sheen coverage. Meanwhile, the possible use of taxpayer dollars (Planned Parenthood receives more than \$363 million in federal subsidies) to fund underage abortions received just 14 minutes and 32 seconds of air time."

New York Times Shows Double Standard on Unemployment

The New York Times has shown a double standard in its coverage of unemployment under President Obama compared to unemployment under President Reagan, according to an analysis by the Business and Media Institute:

"The Labor Department reported on March 4, 2011, that [unemployment] had dropped 0.1 percent to 8.9 percent. **The New York Times called it a 'notable' improvement ... 'The economic waiting game may soon be over, as businesses signal that they are finally willing to resume widespread hiring,'** the March 5, 2011, story by Catherine Rampell began.

"The last time the unemployment rate dropped below 9 percent after a long period above that marker was in 1983 under President Reagan. Back then the Times was much less encouraged by the jobs report, despite a monthly drop that was five times the size of this year's. **On Nov. 6, 1983, the Times led its jobs story by saying that the 0.5 percent drop in unemployment to 8.8 percent 'can't have been much consolation for the 9.9 million Americans who are still out of work.'**"

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