



Media Fairness Initiative

A Look at Bias in the News



Networks Show Bias in Covering President Obama 5/13/09

A Media Research Center (MRC) analysis of ABC, CBS and NBC evening news coverage of President Obama's first 100 days in office shows network reporters have showed a pro-Obama bias. MRC's key findings:

- Network reporters never used the word "liberal" to describe President Obama or his agenda.
- Reporters gave President Obama's \$787 billion stimulus bill mostly positive coverage (58 percent positive, 42 percent negative). Network coverage of President Obama's mortgage bailout was also positive — 59 percent of statements supported the bailout or wanted even more intervention, compared to 41% who opposed the bailout as unfair to homeowners.
- President Obama's decision to send thousands of additional troops to Afghanistan was greeted by nearly entirely positive coverage (91 percent) — in stark contrast from the highly negative coverage of President Bush's successful troop surge in Iraq two years ago.

Journalists Find Jobs in Obama Administration



The news industry faces a new threat to its job force – the Obama Administration. A senior producer at CNN announced last week that she will take a press secretary position in the Administration. **She joins at least nine other reporters from such news outlets as The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, Time magazine, CBS News, ABC News, and CNN who have left their jobs to join the Obama Administration.**

It will be an easy transition for these former journalists since their primary job responsibility – supporting the Obama Administration – remains essentially the same. The bad news for Americans is that the line between objective journalism and partisan politics continues to be blurred.

If the media want to restore their credibility, they should act as objective observers, not seek jobs in the Obama Administration.

Media Show Double Standard on Economic News

The Department of Labor last week reported that there were 539,000 job layoffs in April. **Despite their negative slant on economic news during the Bush Administration, the national media put a positive spin on last week's jobs report.**

The New York Times headline read, "US Jobless Rate Hits 8.9%, but Pace of Losses Eases." *The Associated Press* headline was, "Layoffs slow to 539K in April; jobless rate rises." CNN.com's headline was, "Job losses ease, but unemployment rate up."

In contrast, when national payrolls declined by 533,000 last November before President Obama was inaugurated, the national media had a much more negative spin on the news. For example, The New York Times wrote of "a giant job loss" explaining that it as the "biggest monthly decline in a generation."