

# MEDIA FAIRNESS CAUCUS

*A Look at Media Bias*

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## PolitiFact Caves To Pressure From Pundits

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From Mediaite...

“A few weeks ago, Senator Marco Rubio’s remark that majority of Americans are conservatives got a ‘Mostly True’ ruling from PolitiFact. Now — **not long after MSNBC’s Rachel Maddow slammed the fact-checking organization for inaccuracy** — PolitiFact has changed ‘Mostly True’ to ‘Half True.’ An editor’s note now accompanying the Tampa Bay Times article reads: An analysis of this claim by U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., was published on Feb. 14, 2012. After it appeared, we heard from many readers who argued that our rating of Mostly True was the wrong call. The debate centered on whether to judge Rubio on his literal statement or the underlying point. We try to balance that question in many of our rulings. Upon further discussion, and bolstered by more reporting, we have decided to change this ruling to Half True.

Politico spoke with PolitiFact editor, Bill Adair, on Monday, and asked whether Maddow’s response played any role in the decision. Adair replied, ‘We heard from a lot of readers and got more information that made us go back and examine it again.’”

## Media Blames Oil Companies For High Gas Prices

From NewsBusters...

“While ABC’s World News declared ‘a big chunk of the pain at the pump is Wall Street’s fault’ on Thursday, on NBC’s Nightly News, anchor Brian Williams similarly announced: **‘The problem is gas prices are largely set by commodities traders, also known these days as speculators.’** Correspondent Almaguer reported on ‘backlash from both sides of the register’ as a sound bite played of LA gas station owner ranting: ‘Consumers should be very, very angry and very challenging of the oil companies. That’s where it all starts.’

Almaguer listed reasons for the boost in cost, conveniently leaving out Obama administration policies: ‘The daily spike in gas is blamed mostly on unrest in the Middle East and a rash of refinery shutdowns, but oil production is up and demand at a 15-year low. Some analysts say speculators and investors are pushing up prices, too.’ **President Obama was mentioned in the piece, but only in the context of him telling the American people ‘there’s no quick fix.’ In a clip of the President that followed, Obama proclaimed: ‘You know, we can’t just drill our way to lower gas prices. We’re not going to overnight solve the problem of world oil markets. There is no silver bullet.’**”

## New York Times Smears Koch Brothers

From Big Journalism....

“...global warming leftist Peter Gleick recently **stole and falsified documents** from the free market Heartland Institute in order to try to smear....But **that didn’t stop the Times from reporting on the fake documents as though they were real...** More particularly, the Times cited the portion of the discredited forgeries concerning the Koch brothers.

The Koch Foundation quickly contacted the Times to let them know that they’d gotten the story wrong. But the editor, instead of pulling the story, asked the Foundation to be ‘more explicit.’ **There was nothing to be more explicit about, of course; the document containing the Koch’s name was a forgery.** In point of fact, the Koch Foundation only gave \$25,000 earmarked for healthcare research. As Tonya Mullins, director of communications for the Foundation wrote:

‘One might expect the Times to have some chagrin about its reporting that was based on material obtained by fraud, motivated by an ulterior ideological agenda, and suspect in its authenticity. Yet even though that source lied, cheated, and stole – and refuses to answer any further question from the Times or anyone – reporter Andrew Revkin nonetheless found room to praise him, writing, ‘It’s enormously creditable that Peter Gleick has owned up to his terrible error in judgment.’ **Welcome to the world of the Times, where the Koch brothers are always the villain, even after their supposed villainy has been disproved.**”