

Message

From: Joseph Bast [JBast@heartland.org]
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Subject: Justin Haskins in the Orlando Sentinel: Liberal Bias Has Reached Disturbing New Heights

Another piece of possible interest.

Joe

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<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/os-ed-liberal-media-bias-front-burner-20170912-story.html>

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Liberal Bias Has Reached Disturbing New Heights

By: Justin Haskins, the Heartland Institute

A truly objective press has never existed in the United States, but the news media's current commitment to destroy the Trump administration has revealed the sad reality that much of the American press is hardly engaging in journalism at all. Instead, the media have manipulated the public with falsehoods, trafficked in fear, and mastered hypocrisy in ways that have never before been witnessed. And as a result, our republic has been put in grave danger.

For those of you who deny such a bias exists, the statistics are overwhelming and clear. Media Research Center researchers Rich Noyes and Mike Ciandella analyzed evening news media coverage of the Trump administration on ABC, CBS and NBC during Trump's first 100 days in office. They found those outlets made 1,501 negative statements about the president, excluding statements made by "partisans," compared to only 186 positive statements, a negative-news rate of nearly 90 percent.

Some might think because journalists have a responsibility to be the public's watchdog and to be unafraid to speak truth to power, news coverage of any president's first 100 days would be highly critical, but the evidence says otherwise. A 2009 MRC study shows the majority of the evening news media's coverage of President Barack Obama's first 100 days in office was positive, ranging from a positive-news rate of 58 percent to 82 percent.

Similarly, a study by Thomas E. Patterson at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government determined 80 percent of the news coverage of the Trump administration in its first 100 days was negative, "setting a new standard for unfavorable press coverage of a president."

Critics of Trump will likely argue the massive difference in the media's treatment of the past two presidents is well-deserved, but this would suggest the media are fairly covering Trump's positive news stories but that there are simply fewer of them to report. The evidence suggests the opposite is true.

From Trump's inauguration through the beginning of August, the Dow Jones Industrial Average set 31 record closing highs, but 80 percent of those records were ignored by the evening news programs of ABC, CBS and NBC on the days they occurred.

Not only has the news media overemphasized negative stories and underreported positive news stories related to the Trump administration, it has also published or aired numerous embarrassing and highly partisan reports that are unlike anything distributed by the mainstream press before.

For instance, in May, CNN aired a segment titled “President Gets 2 Scoops of Ice Cream, Everyone Else 1,” during which the network suggested Trump is a greedy glutton during meals at the White House.

In August, Time published “Meet the Man Behind the Big Inflatable Trump Rat Mocking Him in New York,” which featured art gallery owners John Lee and Karin Bravin. They created an “orange-faced, rat-human hybrid” inflatable meant to look like Trump. It had, according to Time’s description, “extra voluminous ears, pursed lips, buck teeth” and an “unmistakable red tie, a long tail, and an extra dig: Confederate flag cufflinks.”

Can you imagine a similar feature being published by Time during the Obama administration?

This media bias shouldn’t come as a surprise; researchers Lars Willnat and David H. Weaver, both professors at Indiana University, found in their 2013 survey only 7.1 percent of journalists identify as Republican. In 1971, 25.7 percent of journalists said they identified as Republican.

The problem isn’t just tied to party affiliation, either. Because the print news industry is being replaced by a more-centralized internet-based media, news outlets are increasingly being headquartered in left-leaning population centers on the East and West Coasts. Politico reported that in 2016 “more than half of publishing employees worked in counties that (Hillary) Clinton won by 30 points or more.”

It’s no wonder then Gallup reports only one-third of Americans have a “great deal” or “fair amount” of trust in the news media and a Harvard-Harris poll found 65 percent of voters say there is a significant amount of “fake news” in the mainstream press.

The news media’s bias has reached an all-time high, and if something doesn’t change soon, people will increasingly put their trust in the hands of people who tell them what they want to hear rather than report real news, or — even worse — people could turn the news off entirely, allowing the government to run amok without any accountability.

Justin Haskins is executive editor of The Heartland Institute.