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# Media Bias Basics

Thirty million Americans rely on broadcast television for their news. They form opinions based on what they hear and see and to a lesser extent, read. Since citizens cannot cast informed votes or make knowledgeable decisions on matters of public policy if the information on which they depend is distorted, it is vital to American democracy that television news and other media be fair and unbiased.

Conservatives believe the mass media, predominantly television news programs, slant reports in favor of the liberal position on issues. Most Americans agree, as the [data](#) below indicate. Yet many members of the media continue to deny a liberal bias.

Evidence of how hard journalists lean to the left was provided by S. Robert Lichter, then with George Washington University, in his groundbreaking 1980 survey of the media elite. Lichter's findings were authoritatively confirmed by the American Association of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) in 1988 and 1997 surveys. The most recent ASNE [study](#) surveyed 1,037 newspaper reporters found 61 percent identified themselves as/leaning "liberal/Democratic" compared to only 15 percent who identified themselves as/leaning "conservative/Republican."

With the political preferences of the press no longer secret, members of the media argued while personally liberal, they are professionally neutral. They argued their opinions do not matter because as professional journalists, they report what they observe without letting their opinions affect their judgment. But being a journalist is not like being a surveillance camera at an ATM, faithfully recording every scene for future playback. Journalists make subjective decisions every minute of their professional lives. They choose what to cover and what not to cover, which sources are credible and which are not, which quotes to use in a story and which to toss out.

Liberal bias in the news media is a reality. It is not the result of a vast left-wing conspiracy; journalists do not meet secretly to plot how to slant their news reports. But everyday pack journalism often creates an unconscious "groupthink" mentality that taints news coverage and allows only one side of a debate to receive a fair hearing. When that happens, the truth suffers. That is why it is so important news media reports be politically balanced, not biased.

The Media Research Center regularly documents the national media's ongoing liberal bias — and has since 1987. For a look at media bias in the last decade, the last year or even last night, check the MRC [homepage](#).

- ▶ [News Division](#)
- ▶ [Free Market Project](#)
- ▶ [CNSNews.com](#)
- ▶ [TimesWatch.org](#)



The information that follows relays the political composition of the media — [voting](#) patterns, political [affiliations](#) and [beliefs](#) — as expressed to researchers by the reporters themselves. This is followed by a review of [public opinion](#) on liberal media bias, and what members of the [media have said](#) about liberal media bias, and a [guide](#) to how to identify liberal media bias.

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## PUBLIC'S OPINION OF MEDIA COVERAGE

Are The Media Biased?

Most Americans View Bias As Liberal

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## HOW TO IDENTIFY MEDIA BIAS

Excerpt of "How to Identify, Expose and Correct Liberal Media Bias"  
by Brent H. Baker of the Media Research Center

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## HOW THE MEDIA VOTE

**Elite Media**

### OVERVIEW

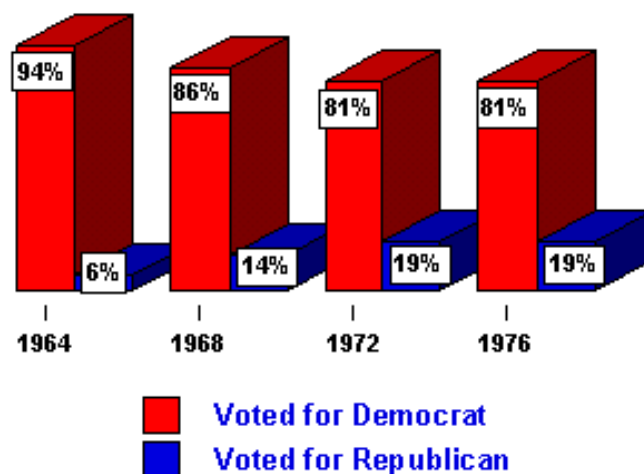
In 1981, S. Robert Lichter, then with George Washington University, and Stanley

Rothman of Smith College, released a groundbreaking survey of 240 journalists at the most influential national media outlets — including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS — on their political attitudes and voting patterns. Results of this study of the "media elite" were included in the October/November 1981 issue of *Public Opinion*, published by the American Enterprise Institute, in the article "Media and Business Elites." The data demonstrated that journalists and broadcasters hold liberal positions on a wide range of social and political issues. This study, which was more elaborately presented in Lichter and Rothman's subsequent book, "The Media Elite," became the most widely quoted media study of the 1980s and remains a landmark today.

## KEY FINDINGS

- 81 percent of the journalists interviewed voted for the Democratic presidential candidate in every election between 1964 and 1976.
- In the Democratic landslide of 1964, 94 percent of the press surveyed voted for President Lyndon Johnson (D) over Senator Barry Goldwater (R).
- In 1968, 86 percent of the press surveyed voted for Democrat Senator Hubert Humphrey.
- In 1972, when 62 percent of the electorate chose President Richard Nixon, 81 percent of the media elite voted for liberal Democratic Senator George McGovern.
- In 1976, the Democratic nominee, Jimmy Carter, captured the allegiance of 81 percent of the reporters surveyed while a mere 19 percent cast their ballots for President Gerald Ford.
- Over the 16-year period, the Republican candidate always received less than 20 percent of the media's vote.

**Presidential Voting Patterns of Media Elite, 1964-1976**



- Lichter and Rothman's survey of journalists discovered that "Fifty-four percent placed themselves to the left of center, compared to only 19 percent who chose the right side of the spectrum."
- "Fifty-six percent said the people they worked with were mostly on the left, and only 8 percent on the right — a margin of seven-to-one."
- Only one percent strongly agreed that environmental problems were overstated, while a majority of 54 percent strongly disagreed.
- 90 percent favored abortion.
- 80 percent supported "strong affirmative action for blacks."
- 54 percent did not regard adultery as wrong, compared to only 15 percent who regarded it as wrong.

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## White House Reporters

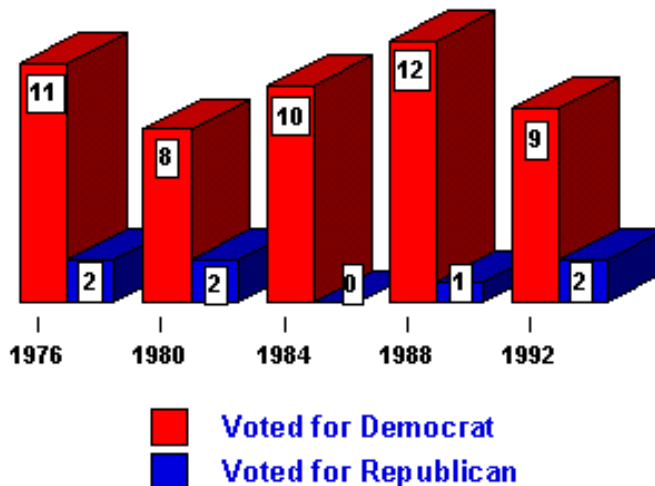
### OVERVIEW

In 1995, Kenneth Walsh, a reporter for *U.S. News & World Report*, polled 28 of his fellow White House correspondents from the four TV networks, the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, Copley, Cox, Hearst, Knight-Ridder, plus *Newsweek*, *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report*, about their presidential voting patterns for his 1996 book "Feeding the Beast: The White House versus the Press." As reported in the MRC's [June 1996 MediaWatch](#), Walsh counted 50 votes by White House correspondents for the Democratic entry compared to just seven for the Republican.

### KEY FINDINGS

- In 1992, nine of the White House correspondents surveyed voted for Democrat Bill Clinton, two for Republican George H. W. Bush, and one for independent Ross Perot.
- In 1988, 12 voted for Democrat Michael Dukakis, one for Bush.
- In 1984, 10 voted for Democrat Walter Mondale, zero for Ronald Reagan.
- In 1980, eight voted for Democrat Jimmy Carter, two voted for Ronald Reagan.
- In 1976, 11 voted for Carter, two for Republican Gerald Ford.

## Presidential Voting Patterns of White House Reporters, 1976-1992



1976: Carter (D), Ford (R); 1980: Carter (D), Reagan (R); 1984: Mondale (D), Reagan (R); 1988: Dukakis (D), Bush (R); 1992: Clinton (D), Bush (R).

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## Washington Bureau Chiefs and Correspondents

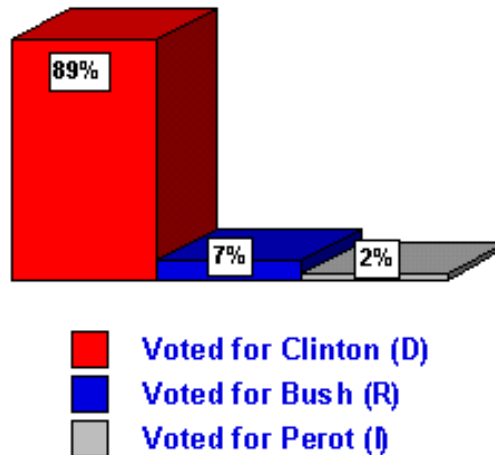
### OVERVIEW

In April 1996, the Freedom Forum published a book by *Chicago Tribune* writer Elaine Povich titled, "Partners and Adversaries: The Contentious Connection Between Congress and the Media." Buried in Appendix D was the real news for those concerned about media bias: Based on the 139 Washington bureau chiefs and congressional correspondents who returned the Freedom Forum questionnaire, the Washington-based reporters — by an incredible margin of nine-to-one — overwhelmingly cast their presidential ballots in 1992 for Democrat Bill Clinton over Republican incumbent George Bush.

### KEY FINDINGS

- 89 percent of Washington-based reporters said they voted for Bill Clinton in 1992. Only seven percent voted for George Bush, with two percent choosing Ross Perot.

## Presidential Voting Preferences of Washington-Based Reporters, 1992



- Asked "How would you characterize your political orientation?" 61 percent said "liberal" or "liberal to moderate." Only nine percent labeled themselves "conservative" or "moderate to conservative."
- 59 percent dismissed the Republican's 1994 Contract with America "an election-year campaign ploy." Just three percent considered it "a serious reform proposal."

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## Newspaper Editors

### OVERVIEW

In January 1998, *Editor & Publisher*, the preeminent media trade magazine, conducted a poll of 167 newspaper editors across the country. *Investor's Business Daily* reporter Matthew Robinson obtained complete poll results, highlights of which were featured in the MRC's [February 1998 MediaWatch](#).

### KEY FINDINGS

- In 1992, when just 43 percent of the public voted Democrat Bill Clinton for President, 58 percent of editors surveyed voted for him.
- In 1996, a minority (49 percent) of the American people voted to reelect Clinton, compared to a majority (57 percent) of the editors.

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## Major Newspaper Reporters

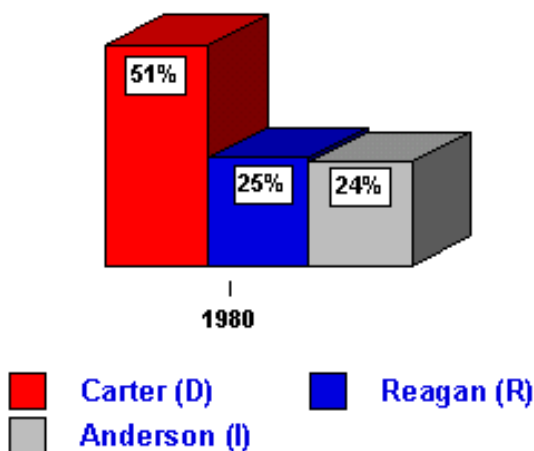
### OVERVIEW

In 1982, scholars at the California State University at Los Angeles asked reporters from the fifty largest U.S. newspapers for whom they voted in 1980. In that election, Republican Ronald Reagan won with 50% of the vote, compared with 41% for Democratic incumbent Jimmy Carter and 8% for liberal Republican-turned-independent Jon Anderson.

### KEY FINDINGS

- 51 percent of big city reporters cast a ballot for Democratic President Jimmy Carter, 24 percent for liberal independent candidate John Anderson, and 25 percent for the Republican winner, Ronald Reagan.

### Presidential Voting Preference of Big City Newspaper Reporters, 1980



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## THE MEDIA'S POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS

**Reporters Disproportionately Identify with Democratic Party**

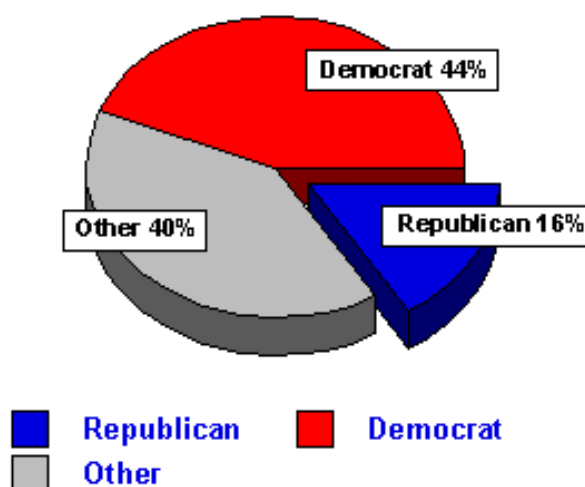
## OVERVIEW

In 1992, the Freedom Forum commissioned two Indiana University professors to survey journalists about their political affiliations. They interviewed more than 1,410 journalists and found the percentage identifying themselves as liberals had grown since the first such poll in 1971, which found a 38-25 percent tilt toward the Democratic side. The results were published in the MRC's [December 1992 \*MediaWatch\*](#).

## KEY FINDINGS

- 44 percent of journalists identified themselves as Democrats, compared to only 16 percent who tagged themselves as Republican.
- Journalists are 5 to 10 percentage points more likely to be Democrats than the general population and 10 to 15 points less likely to be Republicans.

### Self-Identified Political Leanings of Journalists, 1992



- The study authors found "minorities are much more likely to call themselves Democrats than are white journalists, especially blacks (70 percent), Asians (63 percent) and Hispanics (59 percent)."
- Women journalists (58 percent) are much more likely than men (38 percent) to prefer the Democratic Party.

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## Conservative Reporters Few...and Getting Fewer

## OVERVIEW

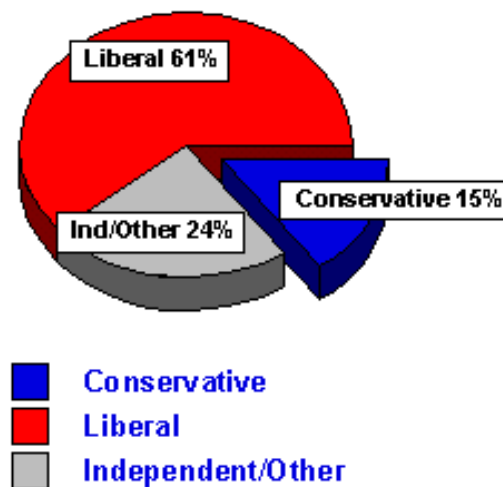
In 1996, as a follow-up to a 1988 survey, the [American Society of Newspaper Editors](#)

(ASNE) surveyed 1,037 reporters at 61 newspapers of all sizes across the nation, asking "What is your political leaning?" Results of the survey were published in ASNE's 1997 report [The Newspaper Journalists of the '90s](#), highlights of which appeared in the MRC's May 1997 *MediaWatch*.

## KEY FINDINGS

- In 1988, 62 percent of journalists identified themselves as "Democrat or liberal" or "lean to Democrat or liberal." In 1996, 61 percent said they were liberal/Democrat or leaning that way.
- In 1988, 22 percent identified themselves as "Republican or conservative" or "lean to Republican or conservative." By 1996 that figure had declined to 15 percent.

### Self-Identified Political Leanings of Newspaper Journalists, 1996



- Those identifying themselves as independent jumped from 17 to 24 percent between the two years.
- At newspapers with more than 50,000 circulation, 65 percent of the staffs were liberal/Democrat or leaned that way. The split at papers of less than 50,000 was less pronounced though still significant, with 51 percent of staffs identifying as liberal/Democrat compared to 23 percent who identified as conservative/Republican.
- Women were more likely than men to identify as liberal/Democratic. Only 11 percent identified themselves as conservative or leaned that way.
- Minorities tend to be more liberal/Democrat with a mere three percent of blacks and eight percent of Asians and Hispanics putting themselves on the right.

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## Liberals Outnumber Conservatives in Newsrooms by 4 to 1, 2 to 1

### OVERVIEW

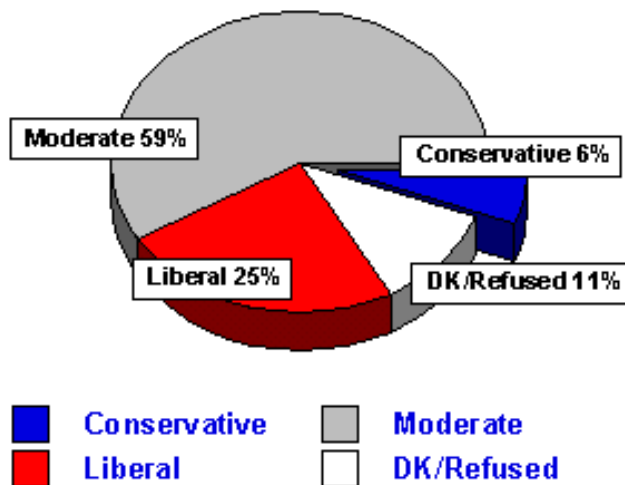
The "[National Survey of the Role of Polls in Policymaking](#)" [full report in PDF], completed by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) in collaboration with *Public Perspective*, a magazine published by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, was released in late June 2001.

The poll questioned 1,206 members of the public, 300 "policymakers" and 301 "media professionals, including reporters and editors from top newspapers, TV and radio networks, news services and news magazines." Significant findings from the survey of media professionals appear below.

### KEY FINDINGS

- The Kaiser Family Foundation survey found that members of the media were four times as likely to identify themselves as "liberal" than as "conservative:"

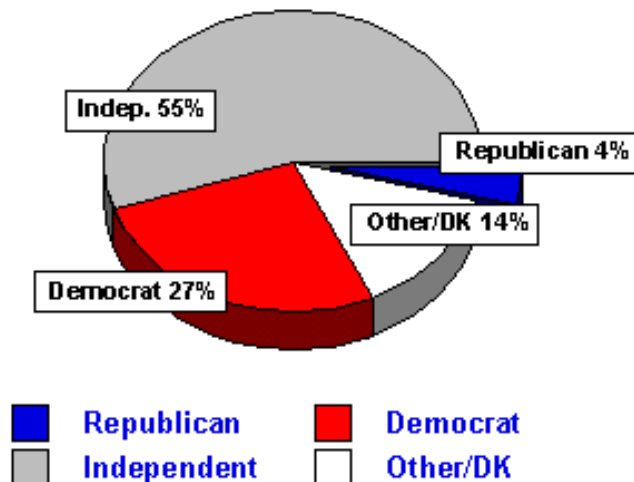
#### Self-Identified Political Leanings of the Press, 2001



Source: [National Survey of the Role of Polls in Policymaking](#) [report in PDF], The Kaiser Family Foundation in collaboration with *Public Perspective*, page 27 question D4, June 2001.

- Similarly, the survey found that members of the media were more than seven times more likely to identify themselves as "Democrat" than as "Republican:"

## Self-Identified Political Affiliations of the Press, 2001



Source: *National Survey of the Role of Polls in Policymaking* [report in PDF], The Kaiser Family Foundation in collaboration with *Public Perspective*, page 27 question D3, June 2001.

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## Most Recent Data: Five Times More Journalists Are Liberal Than Conservative

### OVERVIEW

In May 2004, the [Pew Research Center for the People and the Press](#) surveyed 547 [journalists and media executives](#), including 247 at national-level media outlets. The poll was similar to one conducted by the same group (then known as the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press) in 1995. The actual polling was done by the Princeton Survey Research Associates and the report was released May 23, 2004.

### KEY FINDINGS

- Five times more national outlet journalists identify themselves as “liberal” (34 percent) than “conservative” (just 7 percent). Just over half of the journalists (54 percent) say they are “moderate.”
- The percentage of national reporters saying they are liberal has increased, from 22 percent in 1995 to 34 percent in 2004. The percentage of self-identified conservatives remains low, rising from a meager 4 percent in 1995 to a still-paltry 7 percent in 2004.
- Local reporters are also more liberal than conservative. Pew found that 23 percent of the local journalists they questioned say they are liberals, while about half as many (12 percent) call themselves conservative.

- Most national journalists (55 percent) say the media are “not critical enough” of President Bush, compared with only eight percent who believe the press has been “too critical.” In 1995, the poll found just two percent thought journalists had given “too much” coverage to then-President Clinton’s accomplishments, compared to 48 percent who complained of “too little” coverage of Clinton’s achievements.
- Reporters struggled to name a liberal news organization. According to Pew, “*The New York Times* was most often mentioned as the national daily news organization that takes a decidedly liberal point of view, but only by 20% of the national sample.” Only two percent of reporters suggested CNN, ABC, CBS, or NPR were liberal; just one percent named NBC.
- Journalists did see ideology at one outlet: “The single news outlet that strikes most journalists as taking a particular ideological stance — either liberal or conservative — is Fox News Channel,” Pew reported. More than two-thirds of national journalists (69 percent) tagged FNC as a conservative news organization, followed by *The Washington Times* (9 percent) and *The Wall Street Journal* (8 percent).

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## The American Journalist in the 21st Century

### OVERVIEW

The decennial survey, *The American Journalist in the 21st Century* by David Weaver, Randal Beam, Bonnie Brownlee, G. Cleveland Wilhoit and Paul Voakes in collaboration with the Indiana University School of Journalism and sponsored by the John S. and James L. [Knight Foundation](#), surveyed 1,149 print, radio and television journalists in the fall of 2002. The book, *The American Journalist in the 21st Century*, is not expected to be available until the summer of 2004, but some key findings have already been [reported](#).

### KEY FINDINGS

- In American newsrooms, Democrats outnumber Republicans by two-to-one (37.1 percent to 18.6 percent).
- One third claim to be Independents.

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## Business Reporters Are Reporters, Too

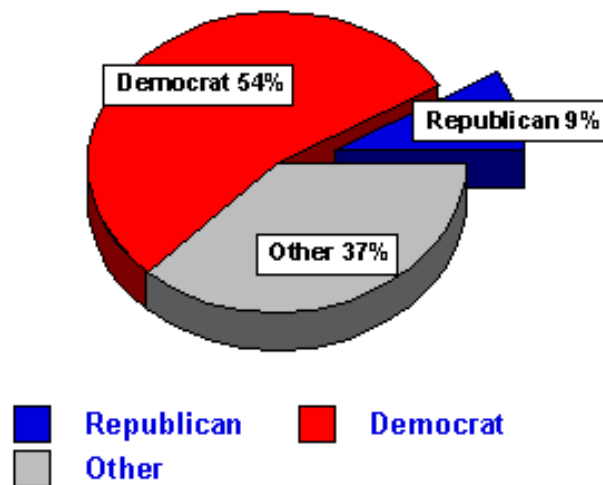
## OVERVIEW

A 1988 poll by the *Journalist and Financial Reporting*, a New York-based newsletter, surveyed 151 business reporters from over 30 publications ranging from the *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* to *Money*, *Fortune* and *Business Week*. The survey found that newspaper and magazine business reporters are as liberal as their colleagues covering politics.

## KEY FINDINGS

- 54 percent identified themselves as Democrats, barely 10 percent as Republicans.
- 76 percent reported they opposed school prayer and 75 percent were against aid to the Contras, rebels fighting the Communist-backed Nicaraguan government. An overwhelming 86 percent favored abortion.
- More than half, 52 percent, evaluated President Reagan's performance in office as "poor" or "below average." Only 17 percent gave him an "excellent" or "good," while 19 percent considered him "average."

**Self-Identified Political Leanings of Business Reporters, 1988**



- Asked who they wished to see become President, 27 percent named liberal New York Governor Mario Cuomo (D), trailed by 20 percent for Senator Bill Bradley (D-NJ) and nine percent for Senator Paul Simon (D-Ill). Senator Bob Dole was the most "popular" Republican, garnering a piddling eight percent.
- Rev. Pat Robertson, then a GOP candidate, topped the list — at 44 percent — of those the reporters would "least like to see as President," followed by 19 percent who named the eventual winner that year, George Bush.

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## WORLDS APART: MEDIA AND PUBLIC BELIEFS

### Massive Majority of Media Hold Strong Liberal Beliefs

#### OVERVIEW

In 1985, the *Los Angeles Times* conducted one of the most extensive surveys of journalists in history. Using the same questionnaire they had used to poll the public, the *Times* polled 2,700 journalists at 621 newspapers across the country. The survey asked 16 questions involving foreign affairs, social and economic issues. On 15 of 16 questions, the journalists gave answers to the left of those given by the public.

#### KEY FINDINGS

- Self-identified liberals outnumbered conservatives in the newsroom by more than three-to-one, 55 to 17 percent. This compares to only one-fourth of the public (23 percent) that identified themselves as liberal.
- 84 percent of reporters and editors supported a so-called "nuclear freeze" to ban all future nuclear missile deployment; 80 percent were against increased defense spending; and 76 percent opposed aid to the Nicaraguan Contras.
- 82 percent of reporters and editors favored allowing women to have abortions; 81 percent backed affirmative action; and 78 percent wanted stricter gun control.
- By a margin of two-to-one, reporters had a negative view of then-President Ronald Reagan and voted, by the same margin, for Walter Mondale in 1984.

The landmark Lichter-Rothman study found similar results among the media elite. While some of the issues of the day are no longer current or expressed in dated phraseology, the results remain relevant:

## Media Elite Opinion on Political, Socio-Cultural and Economic Issues

<b>Political Alienation</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Structure of society causes alienation	12%	37%	32%	20%
Institutions need overhaul	10	18	31	41
All political systems are repressive	4	24	26	46
<b>Socio-Cultural</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Environmental problems are overstated	1%	18%	27%	54%
Strong affirmative action for blacks	33	47	16	4
Government should not regulate sex	84	13	3	1
Woman has right to decide on abortion	79	11	5	5
Homosexuality is wrong	9	16	31	45
Homosexuals should not teach in public schools	3	12	31	54
Adultery is wrong	14	32	34	20
<b>Foreign Policy</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
U.S. exploits Third World, causes poverty	16%	40%	25%	20%
U.S. use of resources is immoral	19	38	27	16
West has helped Third World	6	19	50	25
Goal of U.S. foreign policy is to protect businesses	12	39	28	22
CIA should sometimes undermine hostile governments	26	19	36	19

Source: Lichter, 1981, as reported in "And That's The Way It Isn't" by L. Brent Bozell and Brent H. Baker, published by the Media Research Center.

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## The Media Elite: Liberal on Homosexuality, Abortion and Big Government

### OVERVIEW

In 1995, Stanley Rothman and Amy Black polled the news media elite — “reporters and editors at major national newspapers, news magazines and wire services” as part of a larger examination of nine elite groups in the U.S. The results were published in

the Spring 2001 issue of *The Public Interest*. They found the media elite held strongly liberal views on abortion, homosexuality, and a range of economic issues. “Despite the discrediting of centrally planned economies produced by the collapse of the Soviet Union and other Communist regimes, attitudes about government control of the economy have not changed very much since the 1980s,” the authors marveled.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- Nearly all of the media elite (97 percent) agreed that “it is a woman’s right to decide whether or not to have an abortion,” and five out of six (84 percent) agreed strongly.
- Three out of four journalists (73 percent) agreed that “homosexuality is as acceptable a lifestyle as heterosexuality,” and 40 percent agreed strongly.
- Seven out of ten journalists (71 percent) agreed that “government should work to ensure that everyone has a job,” and 30 percent said they strongly agreed with that statement.
- Three-fourths (75 percent) agreed that “government should work to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor,” and more than a third (34 percent) strongly agreed.
- Relatively few journalists (39 percent) agreed that “less government regulation of business would be good for the economy,” and just five percent strongly agreed with this sentiment.

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## Public Beliefs Much More Conservative

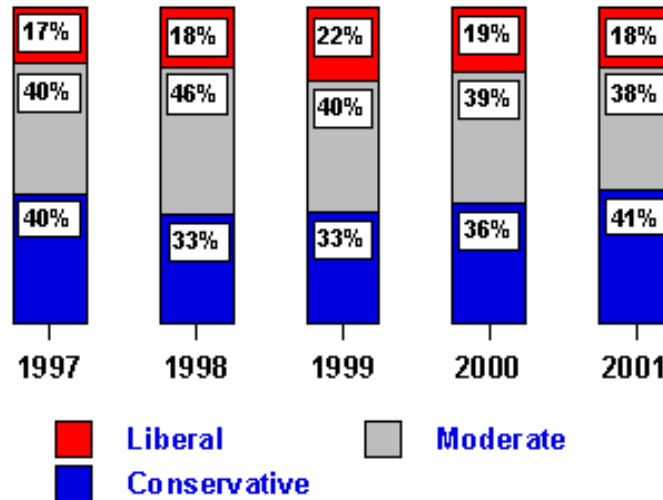
According a 2001 Gallup poll, 41 percent of Americans identify themselves as conservatives, 38 percent as moderates and 18 percent as liberals. On three of four cornerstone political issues, the public overwhelmingly supports the conservative position:

- Americans support the [death penalty](#) by 70 to 17 percent, with 53 percent believing it should be imposed more frequently and more than twice as many opposing a temporary moratorium as favoring one (53 vs. 23 percent).
- Americans support [gun ownership](#) by 66 to 20 percent, with 58 percent agreeing with the statement that "If guns are outlawed only outlaws will have guns." Almost twice as many believe a ban on guns would make the country more dangerous rather than more safe (55 vs. 27 percent).
- Americans support [lowering taxes](#) and government spending by 58 percent, compared to 4 percent who support increasing them and 33% who support the tax and spending status quo.

- When it comes to **abortion**, 52 percent of Americans support the Roe vs. Wade decision compared to 37 percent who oppose it. Exactly half of Americans identify themselves "pro-choice," compared to 42 percent who identify themselves as "pro-life." Nonetheless, 50 percent believe abortion is "too easy" to obtain, compared to only 16 percent who believe it's "too hard" to obtain.

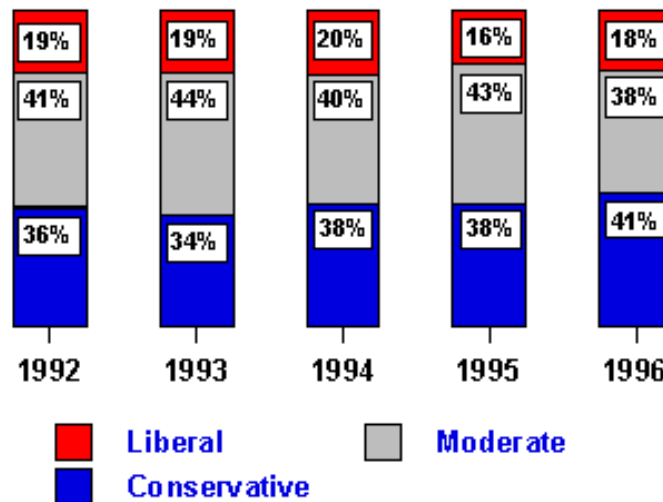
Not surprisingly, when it comes to political ideology, Americans are almost twice as likely to identify themselves as conservative than liberal.

### Self-Identified Political Leanings of the American Public, 1997-2001



Source: Gallup Organization

### Self-Identified Political Leanings of the American Public, 1992-1996



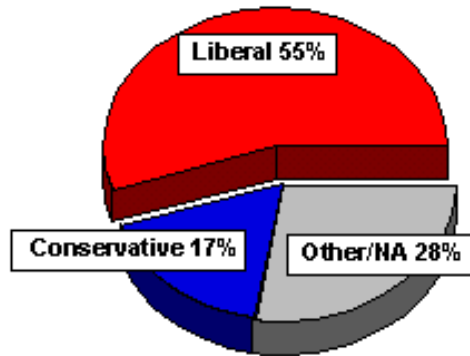
Source: Gallup Organization

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## Media and Public Beliefs Differ Dramatically

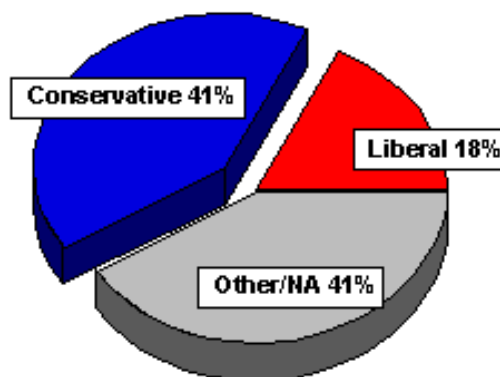
The data above are even more striking when represented in chart form:

### Media Beliefs



Source: *Los Angeles Times*, 1985

### Public Beliefs



Source: Gallup Organization, 2000

Additionally, in February 1985, the *Los Angeles Times* asked nearly 3,000 members of the general public a series of questions about the economy, society, and politics. The researchers categorized separately the responses of college-educated professionals. The *Times* then posed the same series of questions to 2,703 news and editorial staffers at 621 newspapers. The sampling of newspaper staffers was weighted by circulation, so larger

newspapers were given greater representation in the *Times* poll. Slightly more than 22 percent worked for the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* or *Chicago Tribune*. At 587 of the top newspapers, the poll included the top editor. Consistent with the data presented above, this *Los Angeles Times* poll showed a dramatic divergence of opinion between the media and the public on contemporary issues.

### Media and Public Worlds Apart on Economic, Foreign Affairs and Social Issues

Journalists vs. Public and College Educated Professionals	Journalists	Public	College Educated
Consider self/newspaper liberal	55%	23%	38%
Consider self/newspaper conservative	17	29	30
Favor President Reagan	30	56	57
Oppose President Reagan	60	27	33
ECONOMIC ISSUES	Journalists	Public	College Educated
Sympathize with business	27	33	52
Sympathize with labor	31	32	27
Favor government regulation of business	49	22	26
Oppose government regulation of business	41	50	57
Favor government aid to those unable to support themselves	95	83	81
Oppose government aid to those unable to support themselves	3	11	12
Favor government reducing income inequality	50	55	56
Oppose government reducing income inequality	39	23	24
FOREIGN AFFAIRS	Journalists	Public	College Educated
Favor U.S. withdraw investments from South Africa	62	31	48
Oppose U.S. withdraw investments from South Africa	29	27	27
Favor verifiable nuclear freeze	84	66	79
Oppose verifiable nuclear freeze	13	22	17
Favor aid to Nicaraguan contras	17	19	27
Oppose aid to Nicaraguan contras	76	44	53
Favor increasing defense budget	15	38	32
Oppose increasing defense budget	80	51	63

<b>SOCIAL ISSUES</b>	<b>Journalists</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>College Educated</b>
Favor abortion	82	49	68
Oppose abortion	14	44	28
Favor prayer in public schools	25	74	58
Oppose prayer in public schools	67	19	36
Favor affirmative action	81	56	67
Oppose affirmative action	14	21	20
Favor death penalty for murder	47	75	67
Oppose death penalty for murder	47	17	26
Favor hiring homosexuals	89	55	68
Oppose hiring homosexuals	7	31	24
Favor stricter handgun controls	78	50	63
Oppose stricter handgun controls	19	41	34

Source: *Los Angeles Times*, 1985

The most recent data comparing political beliefs of the public to those of the media was included in a larger study by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

## OVERVIEW

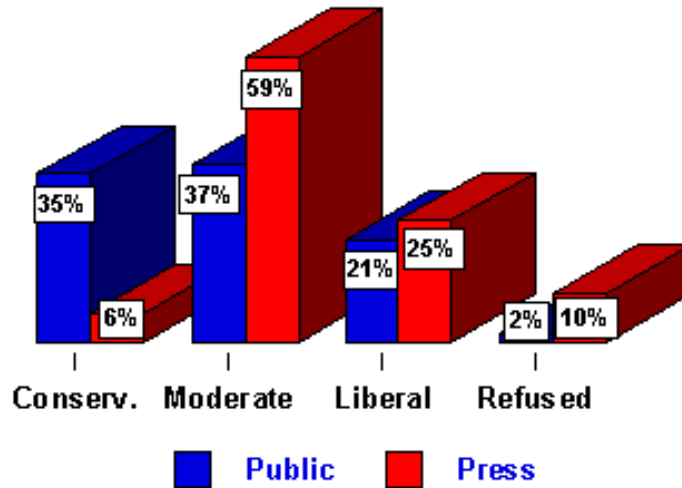
The "[National Survey of the Role of Polls in Policymaking](#)" [report in PDF], completed by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) in collaboration with *Public Perspective*, a magazine published by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, was released in late June 2001.

The poll questioned 1,206 members of the public, 300 "policymakers" and 301 "media professionals, including reporters and editors from top newspapers, TV and radio networks, news services and news magazines." This section looks at survey results relative to members of the public and media professionals.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Members of the public were six times more likely than journalists to consider themselves "conservative:"

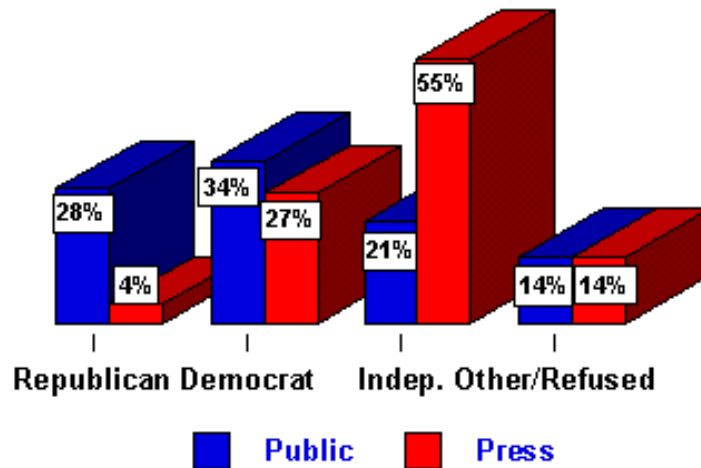
### Political Beliefs of Public and Press, 2001



Source: *National Survey of the Role of Polls in Policymaking* [report in PDF], The Kaiser Family Foundation in collaboration with *Public Perspective*, page 27 question D4, June 2001.

- Members of the public were seven times more likely to identify themselves as "Republican" as were members of the media:

### Self-Identified Political Affiliations of Public and Press, 2001



Source: *National Survey of the Role of Polls in Policymaking* [report in PDF], The Kaiser Family Foundation in collaboration with *Public Perspective*, page 27 question D3, June 2001.

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## **PUBLIC'S OPINION OF MEDIA COVERAGE**

### **Are the Media Biased?**

The issue of public opinion on media bias is comprised of two subparts: Do Americans believe the news media are biased and, if so, what type of bias is it? The answer to the first subpart is clearly yes.

#### **Overview OF THE PEW STUDY**

One of the most [comprehensive surveys](#) of the public's general opinion of the media was done in 1997 by the [Pew Research Center for The People & The Press](#), formerly known as the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press. This research compared poll results from the mid-1980s with the late-1990s, (using identical questions) and determined a growing percentage of the public realize the media are biased. This information was also reported in the MRC's [April 1997 MediaWatch](#).

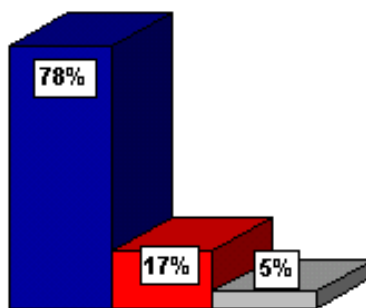
#### **KEY FINDINGS OF THE 1997 PEW STUDY**

- 67 percent said that "In dealing with political and social issues" news organizations "tend to favor one side." That was up 14 points from 53 percent who gave that answer in 1985.
- Those who believed the media "deal fairly with all sides" fell from 34 percent to 27 percent.
- Republicans "are more likely to say news organizations favor one side than are Democrats or independents (77 percent vs. 58 percent and 69 percent, respectively)."
- The percentage who felt "news organizations get the facts straight" fell from 55 percent to 37 percent.
- Of respondents with an unfavorable view of network TV news, 50 percent couldn't give a reason for their dissatisfaction, leaving "news is biased" as the most cited reason at 14 percent. Another seven percent listed "give opinions not facts," and three percent offered "too liberal" as their response. Those three reasons totaled 24 percent while conservative bias didn't make the list.

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#### **OTHER KEY FINDINGS**

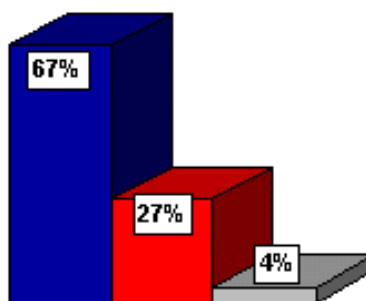
## Are The News Media Biased? Americans Answer the Question



**Yes**      **No**  
**Don't Know**

Source: American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE)  
[Journalism Credibility Project Survey 1998](#) via the  
Roper Center at University of Connecticut, April 1998.

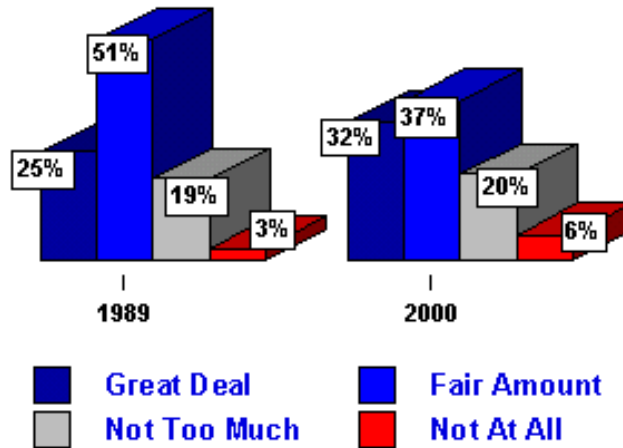
## Do News Media Deal Fairly or Play Favorites with Political Issues?



**Play Favorites**      **Deal Fairly**  
**Don't Know**

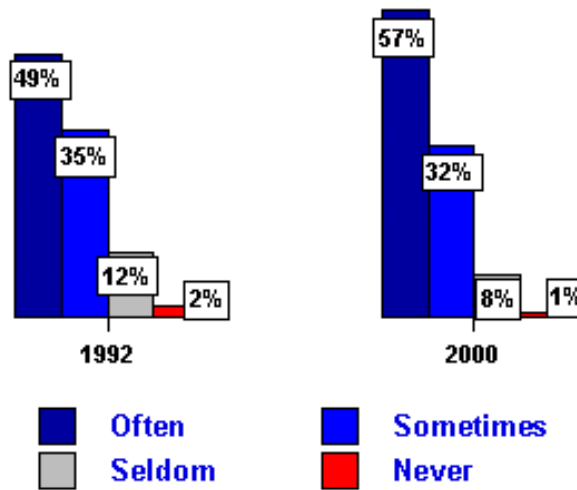
Source: Pew Research Center for The People and The Press survey,  
reported in the [April 1997 MediaWatch](#).

## Public Opinion of Extent of Political Bias in News Coverage



Source: The Pew Research Center for The People & The Press, "The Tough Job of Communicating with Voters; Audiences Fragmented & Skeptical," conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, January 2000.

## How Often Americans Think Media Let Personal Politics Influence Coverage



Source: The Pew Research Center for The People & The Press, "Media Seen As Fair, But Tilting To Gore," October 2000.

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## Most Americans View Bias as Liberal

### OVERVIEW

In 1997, the [Center for Media and Public Affairs](#) (CMPA) retained the Lou Harris Organization to poll 3,000 people about their attitudes toward the press. According to the poll, those who saw a liberal bias outnumbered those who perceived a conservative

bias by two-to-one. The results of the poll were published in the [May/June 1997 Media Monitor](#), the CMPA's newsletter and in the MRC's [October 1997 MediaWatch](#).

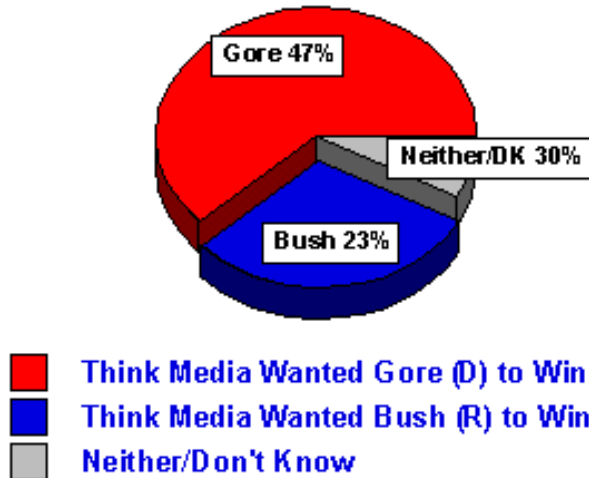
### **KEY FINDINGS OF THE CMPA/HARRIS Survey**

- CMPA reported: "Majorities of all major groups in the population, including 70 percent of self-described liberals, now see a 'fair amount' or 'great deal' of bias in the news. In general, perceptions of bias rise along with levels of education and political participation."
- "Those who see a liberal tilt outnumber those who detect a conservative bias by more than a two to one margin. Forty three percent describe the news media's perspective on politics as liberal, compared to 33 percent who see it as a middle of the road, and 19 percent who find it to be conservative."
- "Even self-described liberals agree: 41 percent see the media as liberal, compared to only 22 percent who find the news to be conservative. Among self-designated conservatives, of course, the spread is even greater: 57 percent say the media are liberal and 19 percent see them as conservative."

Other studies show similar findings:

- 66 percent agree strongly or somewhat that the news media "favor a liberal point of view." Only 26 percent disagree strongly or somewhat that the news media "favor a liberal point of view." (Yankelovich Partners Poll, July 1996.) This is consistent with an earlier poll that found 65 percent agreed strongly or somewhat that the "mass media seem to favor liberal views on politics and issues." Only 28 percent disagreed strongly or somewhat that the "mass media seem to favor liberal views on politics and issues." (Barna Research Group, August 1993.)
- 39 percent think national network TV news is biased against conservative political groups such as the Christian Coalition, National Rifle Association, National Right to Life Committee, compared to only 14 percent who believe it is biased in favor of such groups. 41 percent believed TV news was even-handed toward conservative political groups. (ABC News, January 1997.)
- 32 percent believe the news media coverage of the 1996 presidential campaign was biased to the liberal point of view, compared to only eight percent who believe it was biased to the conservative point of view. (Roper Center, Institute for Social Inquiry, October 1996.)

## Voter Perception of Journalists' Presidential Preferences, 2000



Source: The Pew Research Center for The People & The Press, "Media Seen As Fair, But Titling to Gore," October 2000.

### Most Recent Data: by 3-to-1 Americans Think Media Too Liberal

#### OVERVIEW:

In February 2003, The Gallup Organization polled 1,002 adult Americans about the media's accuracy and objectivity. The results were released in March, 2003, in "News Media Get Good Marks for Terrorism Coverage; But public generally skeptical about media accuracy and objectivity." According to Gallup, a "the poll also shows that, more generally, Americans are skeptical about the...objectivity of the 'fourth estate.'" Archived Gallup polls are only available to subscribers.

#### KEY FINDINGS OF THE GALLUP POLL:

- By three-to-one, more Americans say that the media are too liberal (45%) than too conservative (15%).
- 63% of conservatives think the news media are too liberal, as do 43% of moderates and even 18% of liberals.

#### OVERVIEW:

In the summer of 2003, Princeton Survey Research Associates conducted a poll of 1,201 American adults regarding the media for The Pew Research Center For The People & The Press. Pew released the report, "[Strong Opposition to Media Cross Ownership Emerges: Public Wants Neutrality and Pro American Point of View](#)" on July 13, 2003.

#### KEY FINDINGS OF THE GALLUP POLL:

- Twice as many Americans believe news organizations are liberally (51 percent) rather than conservatively biased (26 percent).
- Not only do a majority of Republicans (by three-to-one) and independents (by two-to-one) see the news media liberally biased, Democrats do as well. Forty-one percent of Democrats perceive the media as liberally biased compared to 33 percent of Democrats who see it as conservatively biased.

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## JOURNALISTS VIEW COLLEAGUES, SELVES AS BIASED

### Newspaper Editors Concede Liberal Bias

#### OVERVIEW

Two recent national surveys on media bias have yielded surprising results. A large percentage of newspaper editors admit there is liberal bias in their own backyards — newspapers — and even more find bias in television and radio stations.

First, in September 1992, the Newspaper Association of America (NAA) commissioned a poll of 94 editors, 89 publishers and 22 executives carrying both titles, asking "Do you believe there's bias in the general media's political coverage?" Highlights of the NAA survey were featured in the MRC's [June 1993 MediaWatch](#).

#### KEY FINDINGS

- 51.7 of respondents believed there was a bias in the general media's political coverage. When they were then asked "toward which agenda, conservative or liberal?" 70.8 percent said liberal, just 7.5 percent conservative.
- However, when asked, "Do you believe there's a bias in newspapers' political coverage?" 59.5 percent responded no and only 37.1 percent said yes. Of those who said yes, 61.8 percent saw a liberal slant, 25 percent said bias went against both agendas and 13.2 percent claimed the bias favored the conservative agenda.

The second surprising survey was conducted by [Editor & Publisher](#), the preeminent newspaper trade magazine, and published in January 1998. The poll surveyed 167 newspaper editors across the country. *Investor's Business Daily* reporter Matthew

Robinson obtained full poll results, highlights of which were featured in the MRC's February 1998 *MediaWatch*.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Asked how they think the public perceives newspapers, 89 percent of newspaper editors said "liberal" compared to a measly 1.2 percent who responded "conservative." Another 4.3 percent said moderate.
- Many editors were willing to concede the slant, with more than three times as many describing American dailies as liberal over conservative: 25.1 percent to 7.8 percent with 62.9 percent tagging papers as moderate.
- "How often do journalists' opinions influence coverage?" While only 14 percent said "often," a solid majority of 57 percent conceded it "sometimes" happens, meaning 71 percent acknowledge the connection between personal views and coverage.

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## IN THEIR OWN WORDS: WHAT MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA SAY ABOUT LIBERAL BIAS

### Admissions of Liberal Bias

- "I thought he [former CBS News correspondent Bernard Goldberg] made some very good points. There is just no question that I, among others, have a liberal bias. I mean, I'm consistently liberal in my opinions. And I think some of the, I think Dan [Rather] is transparently liberal. Now, he may not like to hear me say that. I always agree with him, too, but I think he should be more careful."  
*-- CBS's 60 Minutes commentator Andy Rooney on Goldberg's book, Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News, on CNN's Larry King Live, June 5, 2002*
- "Most of the time I really think responsible journalists, of which I hope I'm counted as one, leave our bias at the side of the table. Now it is true, historically in the media, it has been more of a liberal persuasion for many years. It has taken us a long time, too long in my view, to have vigorous conservative voices heard as widely in the media as they now are. And so I think yes, on occasion, there is a liberal instinct in the media which we need to keep our eye on, if you will."  
*-- ABC anchor Peter Jennings appearing on CNN's Larry King Live, April 10, 2002*
- "[Journalists] have a certain worldview based on being in Manhattan...that isn't per se liberal, but if you look at people there, they lean' in that direction." — *Columbia Journalism Review publisher David Laventhol, as reported in "Leaning on the Media" by Mark Jurkowitz, The Boston Globe, January 17, 2002.*
- "There is a liberal bias. It's demonstrable. You look at some statistics. About 85 percent of the reporters who cover the White House vote Democratic, they have

for a long time. There is a, particularly at the networks, at the lower levels, among the editors and the so-called infrastructure, there is a liberal bias. There is a liberal bias at Newsweek, the magazine I work for — most of the people who work at Newsweek live on the upper West Side in New York and they have a liberal bias....[ABC White House reporter] Brit Hume's bosses are liberal and they're always quietly denouncing him as being a right-wing nut." — *Newsweek Washington Bureau Chief Evan Thomas in an admission on Inside Washington, May 12, 1996.*

- "Everybody knows that there's a liberal, that there's a heavy liberal persuasion among correspondents.....Anybody who has to live with the people, who covers police stations, covers county courts, brought up that way, has to have a degree of humanity that people who do not have that exposure don't have, and some people interpret that to be liberal. It's not a liberal, it's humanitarian and that's a vastly different thing." -- *Walter Cronkite, March 21, 1996 Radio & TV Correspondents Dinner.*
- "There are lots of reasons fewer people are watching network news, and one of them, I'm more convinced than ever, is that our viewers simply don't trust us. And for good reason. The old argument that the networks and other `media elites' have a liberal bias is so blatantly true that it's hardly worth discussing anymore. No, we don't sit around in dark corners and plan strategies on how we're going to slant the news. We don't have to. It comes naturally to most reporters.....Mr. Engberg's report set new standards for bias....Can you imagine, in your wildest dreams, a network news reporter calling Hillary Clinton's health care plan 'wacky?' ...  
"Reality Check' suggests the viewers are going to get the facts. And then they can make up their mind. As Mr. Engberg might put it: `Time Out!' You'd have a better chance of getting the facts someplace else -- like Albania." — *CBS reporter Bernard Goldberg on an anti-flat tax story by CBS reporter Eric Engberg, February 13, 1996 Wall Street Journal op-ed.*
- "I think this is another reflection of the overwhelming journalistic tilt towards liberalism and those programs. Now the question is whether that's bad or not, and that's another debate. But the idea that many of us, and my colleagues deny that there is this kind of bias is nuts, because there is in our world. I forget what the surveys show but most of us are Democratic and probably most of us line up in the fairly liberal world." — *Time Washington contributing editor Hugh Sidey responding to a caller who asked if journalists are in favor of affirmative action, July 21, 1995 C-SPAN Washington Journal.*
- "As much as we try to think otherwise, when you're covering some- one like yourself, and your position in life is insecure, she's your mascot. Something in you roots for her. You're rooting for your team. I try to get that bias out, but for many of us it's there." — *Time Senior Writer Margaret Carlson quoted in The Washington Post, March 7, 1994.*
- "I think liberalism lives — the notion that we don't have to stay where we are as a society, we have promises to keep, and it is liberalism, whether people like it or not, which has animated all the years of my life. What on Earth did conservatism ever accomplish for our country? It was people who wanted to change things for the better." — *Charles Kuralt talking with Morley Safer on the CBS special, One for the Road with Charles Kuralt, May 5, 1994.*

- "I won't make any pretense that the American Agenda is totally neutral. We do take a position. And I think the public wants us now to take a position. If you give both sides and 'Well, on the one hand this and on the other that'--I think people kind of really want you to help direct their thinking on some issues." — ***ABC News reporter Carole Simpson on CNBC's Equal Time, August 9, 1994.***
- "I think we are aware, as everybody who works in the media is, that the old stereotype of the liberal bent happens to be true, and we're making a concerted effort to really look for more from the other, without being ponderous or lecturing or trying to convert people to another way of thinking." — ***ABC World News Tonight Executive Producer Emily Rooney, September 27, 1993 Electronic Media.***
- "The group of people I'll call The Press — by which I mean several dozen political journalists of my acquaintance, many of whom the Buchanan administration may someday round up on suspicion of having Democratic or even liberal sympathies — was of one mind as the season's first primary campaign shuddered toward its finish. I asked each of them, one after another, this question: If you were a New Hampshire Democrat, whom would you vote for? The answer was always the same; and the answer was always Clinton. In this group, in my experience, such unanimity is unprecedented....  
"Almost none is due to calculations about Clinton being 'electable'...and none at all is due to belief in Clinton's denials in the Flowers business, because no one believes these denials. No, the real reason members of The Press like Clinton is simple, and surprisingly uncynical: they think he would make a very good, perhaps a great, President. Several told me they were convinced that Clinton is the most talented presidential candidate they have ever encountered, JFK included." — ***New Republic Senior Editor Hendrik Hertzberg, March 9, 1992 issue.***
- "We're unpopular because the press tends to be liberal, and I don't think we can run away from that. And I think we're unpopular with a lot of conservatives and Republicans this time because the White House press corps by and large detested George Bush, probably for good and sufficient reason, they certainly can cite chapter and verse. But their real contempt for him showed through in their reporting in a way that I think got up the nose of the American people." — ***Time writer William A. Henry III on the PBS November 4, 1992 election-night special The Finish Line.***
- "Indeed, coverage of the campaign vindicated exactly what conservatives have been saying for years about liberal bias in the media. In their defense, journalists say that though they may have their personal opinions, as professionals they are able to correct for them when they write. Sounds nice, but I'm not buying any." — ***Former Newsweek reporter Jacob Weisberg in The New Republic, November 23, 1992 issue.***
- "There is no such thing as objective reporting...I've become even more crafty about finding the voices to say the things I think are true. That's my subversive mission." — ***Boston Globe environmental reporter Dianne Dumanoski at an Utne Reader symposium May 17-20, 1990. Quoted by Micah Morrison in the July 1990 American Spectator.***

- "I do have an axe to grind...I want to be the little subversive person in television." — **Barbara Pyle, CNN Environmental Editor and Turner Broadcasting Vice President for Environmental Policy, as quoted by David Brooks in the July 1990 American Spectator.**
- "I'm not sure it's useful to include every single point of view simply in order to cover every base because you can come up with a program that's virtually impossible for the audience to sort out." — **PBS Senior Producer Linda Harrar commenting on PBS's ten-part series, Race to Save The Planet, to MRC and reported in the December 1990 MediaWatch.**
- "As the science editor at *Time* I would freely admit that on this issue we have crossed the boundary from news reporting to advocacy." — **Time Science Editor Charles Alexander at a September 16, 1989 global warming conference at the Smithsonian Institution as quoted by David Brooks in an October 5, 1989 Wall Street Journal Journal column.**
- "Clearly the networks have made that decision now, where you'd have to call it [global warming stories] advocacy." — **NBC News Capitol Hill correspondent Andrea Mitchell at a September 16, 1989 global warming conference at the Smithsonian Institution as quoted by David Brooks in an October 5, 1989 Wall Street Journal Journal column.**

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## Denials of Liberal Bias

- "I have yet to see a body of evidence that suggests the reporting that gets on the air reflects any political bias." — **Former CNN and CBS reporter, now Executive Director of NewsLab, Deborah Potter as reported in "Leaning on the Media" by Mark Jurkowitz, The Boston Globe, January 17, 2002.**
- "Searching for the unbiased human being is an impossible task...What makes journalists skilled is that they know how to be fair." — **Former CNN President Rick Kaplan as reported in "Leaning on the Media" by Mark Jurkowitz, The Boston Globe, January 17, 2002.**
- "I'm not liberal. First of all, I finally decided to get rid of those two words, 'liberal' and 'conservative.' I don't know what they mean anymore. I mean, I've come down to 'sense' and 'nonsense.' It makes sense to me, it's got nothing to do with conservative or liberal, it makes sense to me that hunters be allowed to have rifles. It makes no sense to me that there are 200 million handguns in American cities. I have always believed that if you get the NRA out of the way, decent reasonable Americans would figure out a way to respect the Second Amendment and get guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them." — **Don Hewitt, Executive Producer of CBS's 60 Minutes, on CNN's Larry King Live, April 11, 2001.**
- "I think the tag, you know, somehow or another, 'he's a bomb-throwing Bolshevik from the left side' that's attached to me, is put there by people who, they subscribe to the idea either you report the news the way we want you to report it, or we're gonna tag some, what we think negative sign on you." —

*CBS's Dan Rather, CNBC's Rivera Live, May 21, 2001.*

- "I think there is a mainstream media. CNN is mainstream media, and the main, ABC, CBS, NBC are mainstream media. And I think it's just essentially to make the point that we are largely in the center without particular axes to grind, without ideologies which are represented in our daily coverage, at least certainly not on purpose." — *ABC's Peter Jennings, CNN's Larry King Live, May 15, 2001.*
- "The idea that we would set out, consciously or unconsciously, to put some kind of an ideological framework over what we're doing is nonsense." — *NBC's Tom Brokaw, C-SPAN's Washington Journal, May 24, 2001.*
- **Bill Press:** "Why is it that you are the epitome of the left-wing liberal media in the mind of every conservative I've ever talked to? What did you do to get that reputation?"  
**Dan Rather:** "I remained an independent reporter who would not report the news the way they wanted it or – from the left or the right. I'm a lifetime reporter. All I ever dreamed of was being a journalist, and the definition of journalist to me was the guy who's an honest broker of information....I do subscribe to the idea of: 'Play no favorites and pull no punches.'" — *Exchange on CNN's Crossfire, June 24, 1999.*
- "I think we can now safely conclude that this whole notion that the liberal media elite is coddling Bill Clinton and always plays to the Democrats is absurd. I mean the fact is who's been the undoing of Bill Clinton: *Newsweek* and *The Washington Post*, those raging conservative publications..." — *Former New York Times and U.S. News reporter Steve Roberts on Lewinsky scandal coverage, CNN's Late Edition, February 1, 1998.*
- "I was about to say that if you want to talk about bias, go ask President Clinton where the bias lies. As you know, the White House just issued this big huge study, they called it, of how the mainline media is sucked in by the right-wing conspiratorialists. My point is that everybody who watches television brings their own biases to it, and if what you're watching doesn't please you, then you think we're biased. Everybody dislikes the messenger. Everybody complains about us, right wing, left wing, Democrats, Republicans. They all pound on us. They all think we're unfair to them if we're telling them things they don't want to hear. And we do the best we can. We try to be fair." — *CBS 60 Minutes reporter Lesley Stahl on C-SPAN's Washington Journal, January 31, 1997.*
- "There is no convincing evidence that journalists infect their stories — intentionally or otherwise — with their own political prejudices....While a few studies suggest such a link, most are the handiwork of right-leaning groups and critics whose research methods can't withstand scrutiny....The credibility of the media is not suffering because of a liberal bias; it's suffering, in large part, because of the continuing charge of bias that has gone unanswered for too long." — *Everette Dennis, Senior VP of the Freedom Forum, in the January-February 1997 edition of ASNE's magazine, The American Editor.*
- "I don't think voting for Clinton makes you a liberal. I mean, Bill Clinton isn't even a liberal, and second, if you're liberal, does that mean you can't be fair? What hypocrisy that we sit around and talk about the press like it's some sort of 'they.' It's us. Are we too liberal? N-O." — *Newsweek's Eleanor Clift on The*

**McLaughlin Group, July 5, 1997.**

- "Scholar after scholar has disputed, in studying the actual content of the press, what you've just blithely handed out that it's this left-wing media. That's a charge from the '50s. That's not the current press....the bias is a bias against politicians of all kinds, not a bias for one side or other." — **Ellen Hume, Director of the PBS Democracy Project, reacting to Bob Novak's assertion the mainstream media are "tilted to the left." July 27, 1997 CNN's Reliable Sources.**
- "When you're talking about pure journalists, I mean reporters, when you're talking about reporters, not columnists, I don't think there's any liberal bias. I don't think there really ever has been." — **Los Angeles Times Senior Washington correspondent Jack Nelson on CNBC's Politics '96, March 9, 1996.**
- "I think the fact that we're still standing, this day, 35 years after we...entered this business, is some, immodestly, some small tribute the fact that we've worked very hard to drain the bias out of what we do." — **NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw at the National Press Club, June 11, 1996.**
- **Question:** "I don't think it's your personal liberal bias that's well-known, but the liberal bias of your network is obvious."  
**ABC News anchor Carole Simpson:** "I challenge you to give me examples of that. I disagree wholeheartedly. I think it's again, an example of the mean-spiritedness that is these days also directed at the media." — **January 5, 1995 AOL auditorium session.**
- "It's one of the great political myths, about press bias. Most reporters are interested in a story. Most reporters don't know whether they're Republican or Democrat, and vote every which way. Now, a lot of politicians would like you to believe otherwise, but that's the truth of the matter. I've worked around journalism all of my life, Tom Snyder has as well, and I think he'll agree with this, that most reporters, when you get to know them, would fall in the general category of kind of common-sense moderates. And also, let me say that I don't think that 'liberal' or 'conservative' means very much any more, except to those kind of inside-the-Beltway people who want to use it for their own partisan political advantage. I don't think it holds up." — **Dan Rather answering a caller's question about liberal bias on CBS's Late Late Show with Tom Snyder, February 8, 1995.**
- **Larry King:** "Over all these fifteen years, how do you react to the constant, especially, far right-wing criticism that the news on CBS is mainstream biased?"  
**Dan Rather:** "...Well, my answer to that is basically a good Texas phrase, which is bullfeathers....I think the fact that if someone survives for four or five years at or near the top in network television, you can just about bet they are pretty good at keeping independence in their reporting. What happens is a lot of people don't want independence. They want the news reported the way they want it for their own special political agendas or ideological reasons." — **CNN's Larry King Live, March 11, 1995.**
- "I don't think the coverage of Gingrich and the GOP Congress has been liberally biased..." — **ABC's Cokie Roberts on CNBC's Meet the Media, October 23,**

**1995.**

- "I'm all news, all the time. Full power, tall tower. I want to break in when news breaks out. That's my agenda. Now respectfully, when you start talking about a liberal agenda and all the, quote, liberal bias in the media, I quite frankly, and I say this respectfully but candidly to you, I don't know what you're talking about. Now if you want to talk about an issue, what do I believe as a citizen of the United States of America, I can tell you what I believe in. I believe in a strong defense, clean water, and tight money. Now whatever that makes me politically, that's what I am. What I don't like, and if you want to see my neck swell or the hair begin to rise on the back of my neck, is to be tagged by someone else's label. I try really hard not to do that with other people, particularly people who are in public service and politics." — **Dan Rather to talk radio host Mike Rosen of KOA in Denver, November 28, 1995.**
- "A liberal bias? I don't know what a liberal bias is. Do you mean we care about the poor, the sick, and the maimed? Do we care whether people are being shot every day on the streets of America? If that's liberal, so be it. I think it's everything that's good in life — that we do care. And also for the solutions — we seek solutions and we do think that we are all responsible for what happens in this country." — **UPI White House correspondent Helen Thomas on C-SPAN's Journalists' Roundtable, December 31, 1993.**
- "My reaction to that button ['Rather Biased'] and others, in part, is a button I bought yesterday that says 'Yeah, I'm In The Media, Screw You!' ....I do understand why a lot of people are upset with us, why we rank somewhere between terrorists and bank robbers on the approval scale. We do criticize. That's part of our role. Our role is not just to parrot what people say, it's to make people think. I think that sometimes I want to say to the electorate 'Grow up!'" — **Newsweek reporter Ginny Carroll on C-SPAN's Journalists' Roundtable, August 21, 1992.**
- "I don't think there is [a bias] at all. I think anyone who accuses the press of bias is acting in desperation, I think. I think the press has been much more aggressive and fair, in being, in going after both sides, and looking, than ever before." — **New York Times reporter Richard Berke on CNN's Larry King Live, October 16, 1992.**
- "I think there are reporters around Clinton who are baby boomers who are drawn to him. I think there are a lot of reporters in Washington who just wish for a new story. But I watch probably as many talk shows, and as many interview shows, what George Bush calls the professional talking heads on Sundays, as anybody else. I actually think the bias, in the overall system, is from the center to the right." — **PBS's Bill Moyers on CNN's Larry King Live, November 2, 1992.**

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## **Beyond Admissions and Denials, A Different Take on Liberal Media Bias**

"I'd bet that if you hooked Dan and Tom and Peter up to a lie detector and asked them if there's a liberal bias on their newscasts, they'd all say 'no' and they'd all pass the test...."

That leaves one other possibility. Messrs. Rather, Brokaw and Jennings don't even know what liberal bias is. I concede this is hard to believe, but I'm convinced it's why we keep getting these ridiculous denials....The problem is that Mr. Rather and the other evening stars think that liberal bias means just one thing: going hard on Republicans and easy on Democrats. But real media bias comes not so much from what party they attack. Liberal bias is the result of how they see the world.... And it is this inability to see liberal views as liberal that is at the heart of the entire problem. This is why Phyllis Schlafly is the conservative woman who heads that conservative organization but Patricia Ireland is merely the head of NOW. No liberal labels necessary. Robert Bork is the conservative judge. Laurence Tribe is the noted Harvard law professor.... Conservatives must be identified because the audience needs to know these are people with axes to grind. But liberals don't need to be identified because their views on all the big social issues -- from abortion and gun control to the death penalty and affirmative action -- aren't liberal views at all. They're simply reasonable views, shared by all the reasonable people the media elites mingle with at all their reasonable dinner parties in Manhattan and Georgetown...." — *Former CBS News correspondent Bernard Goldberg, Wall Street Journal op-ed, "On Media Bias, Network Stars Are Rather Clueless," May 24, 2001.*

## HOW TO IDENTIFY MEDIA BIAS

Can you name the eight types of media bias? Learn the types of bias, how to identify bias, and what isn't bias in this excerpt of "[How to Identify, Expose And Correct Liberal Media Bias](#)" by the Media Research Center's [Brent H. Baker](#).

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**Media Research Center**  
325 S. Patrick Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

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