

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: TONI GRUENINGER

BUSH SETS TV NEWS AGENDA, STUDY FINDS

George Bush has dominated TV news election coverage, according to a new study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs. The study finds that crime and national defense have topped the networks' issue coverage, Dukakis has been called a liberal on the network evening news twelve times as frequently as he was during the primaries, and Bush received over twice as much good press as Dukakis during the critical period when he moved ahead in the polls.

CMPA researchers analyzed 474 election stories totalling 14 hours of airtime on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news from the end of the Republican convention on August 19 through the last Presidential debate on October 13. The study will continue through November 8. Major Findings:

- * Bush's agenda - Defense was the issue mentioned most often during the first month of the campaign; crime has led the list since then. Together these Bush agenda issues have been covered 141 times on the evening news.
- * The "L" word - Dukakis has been called a liberal over three times a week on the evening news, compared to less than once a month during the primaries.
- * Better press for Bush - Bush surpassed Dukakis in good press by a decisive 56% to 22% from mid-August through Labor Day, when he moved ahead in most polls.
- * Positive polls - Nearly one story in four - 108 in all - has featured poll results, mostly favorable toward Bush.

According to Center co-director S. Robert Lichter, "Despite all the attention to his negative ads, Bush's domination of the network newscasts was the real catalyst to his comeback."

Complete results of the study appear in the November issue of Media Monitor, published by the Center for Media and Public Affairs. The Center is a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization that conducts scientific studies of news reports. A complimentary copy of the study is available upon request.