



Media Monitor

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NEWS RELEASE

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QUAYLE GETS WORST PRESS SINCE HART

Senator Dan Quayle got the worst press since Gary Hart and the most coverage of anyone but George Bush, according to a study of 1988 election coverage by the Center for Media and Public Affairs.

Researchers examined all stories on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news from Vice-President Bush's August 16 selection of Senator Quayle as his running mate through August 28, the next day that no stories aired on Senator Quayle. They compared Senator Quayle's media profile with other findings from an ongoing Center study of the 1988 election coverage. Results appear in the September issue of Media Monitor, the Center's monthly newsletter.

Major findings from the study:

- * In 12 days the networks broadcast 93 stories on Senator Quayle, more than they ran on 12 of the 13 presidential candidates during the 1988 primaries. Only Bush received more coverage.
- * The cumulative airtime of 3 hours 22 minutes means that the Quayle story took up more than one-quarter of all evening news broadcasts for nearly two weeks after his nomination.
- * Evaluation of Senator Quayle by reporters and other nonpartisan analysts were only 33% positive, worse than any candidate received during the primaries aside from Gary Hart's 21% positive rating. In comparison, Bush's evaluations during the primaries were 49% positive, Dukakis's were 58% positive, and all candidates combined were 54% positive.
- * Senator Quayle's military service record was by far the most common topic, appearing in 50 stories. His privileged background was a topic of 19 stories, his relationship to lobbyist Paula Parkinson arose in 13 stories, and his good looks in 10 stories (6 of which compared him to Robert Redford).
- * Senator Quayle emerged as 1988's "Mr. Conservative." He was called a conservative 24 times in 12 days. By contrast, all Republican primary candidates combined were called conservatives only 27 times on the evening news during 18 months of campaigning.

The Center for Media and Public Affairs is a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization that conducts scientific studies of news reports. It is directed by social scientists Robert and Linda Lichter. Robert Lichter also holds the DeWitt Wallace Chair in Communications at the American Enterprise Institute. A complimentary copy of the study is available upon request.

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