

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 14, 1992**

CONTACT: TONI MANN

TV News Study Finds ABC Toughest on Clinton

ABC has been far tougher on Gov. Bill Clinton than CBS and NBC, according to an ongoing study of network news election coverage conducted by the **Center for Media and Public Affairs**. ABC's coverage of Clinton has been 83% negative throughout the campaign, long before ABC News procured a controversial 1969 letter regarding Clinton's draft status. The study also finds that Paul Tsongas has fared best and George Bush worst of all major candidates in the race for good news.

The study is being conducted by the **Center for Media and Public Affairs**, a nonpartisan research organization that uses scientific content analysis to monitor media coverage. Researchers examined all statements by sources and reporters on 143 election stories on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news from January 1 through February 11. They analyzed 358 evaluations of all candidates as well as 246 predictions of their prospects in the campaign "horse race."

Major Findings:

* **ABC vs. Clinton** On ABC five out of six evaluations of Clinton (83%) were negative. On the other two networks he received balanced coverage -- 53% positive evaluations (47% negative) on CBS and 50% positive (50% negative) on NBC. On the three networks combined, Clinton received only 39% positive press, worst among the Democratic candidates. He dropped from 46% positive before Gennifer Flowers' allegations appeared to only 33% positive since then.

Examples: Bad Press: I think he has something to hide.
-- radio show caller, ABC, 1/27

Bad Press: If he's going to cheat on his wife, he's going to cheat on America.
-- voter, NBC, 2/11

(more)

* **Cheers for Tsongas** Paul Tsongas is the only candidate to get high marks for both his personal qualities and his electability -- his 68% good press is exceeded by his 86% positive horse race ratings.

Examples: Good Press: I think he [Tsongas] has a charisma all his own.
-- voter, ABC, 2/10

Horse Race: Suddenly in New Hampshire, The Paul Tsongas for president campaign has begun to look like a hit.
-- Richard Threlkeld, CBS, 2/11

* **Jeers for Bush** George Bush got the worst press (only 28% positive) and the worst horse race ratings (only 17% positive) of any major candidate. His opponent Pat Buchanan got balanced marks on both counts -- 50% good press and 47% positive horse race ratings.

Examples: Bad Press: It's tough to lead when you don't know where you want to go. Call it a vision; George Bush doesn't seem to have one.
-- Lisa Myers, NBC, 1/28

Horse Race: President Bush has used the word "free-fall" in talking about the economy. ... "free-fall" may apply to his popularity as well.
-- Susan Spencer, CBS, 1/20

* **All Eyes on Clinton** Despite his poor evaluations, Clinton attracted more attention than his four Democratic opponents combined. The networks ran 37 stories on Clinton, compared to 11 apiece on Tsongas and Harkin, 10 on Kerrey, and 4 on Brown.

* **Less Election News** The networks have aired less than half as much election coverage as they did four years ago -- 143 stories vs. 288 stories from Jan. 1 to Feb. 11, 1988. The big difference -- only 6 stories on Iowa this year vs. 105 in 1988. CBS has broadcast the most stories -- 61, compared to 43 on NBC and 39 on ABC.

The Center for Media and Public Affairs is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that conducts scientific content analysis of news and entertainment media. Complete findings from the study are available upon request.