



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION:
VINCENT SOLLITTO

CBS MOST CRITICAL OF REPUBLICAN TICKET; ABC, NBC MORE BALANCED

Study Since January 1st Finds Network Coverage Differences

Big Three Turn More Negative In Fall Campaign Season

WASHINGTON, D.C.--CBS has been toughest on President Bush while ABC has been the most balanced this election, according to the latest update of an ongoing election coverage study by the **Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA)**. The scientific analysis by the independent research group studied the 62.75 hours (1,933 stories) of airtime ABC, CBS, and NBC have given the election on their nightly newscasts from January 1 to October 11.

So far this year, 72% of CBS sources commenting on Bush were critical; 56% of those commenting on Clinton were negative, a 16 point gap. ABC had the most balanced commentary with only a 4 point difference in negative evaluations (65%-61%); NBC had a 9 point gap (69%-60%).

Since Labor Day kicked off the fall campaign, however, the gap in coverage tightened, due to increasingly negative assessments of Clinton this fall. CBS sources have been 76% negative toward Bush and 69% negative toward Clinton, narrowing their gap to 7 points. ABC remained the most balanced (65%-64%), followed closely by NBC (69%-67%).

The study also found differences in candidate evaluations between partisan and non-partisan sources. Sources identified as Democrats or Republicans have been more favorable to the Republican ticket (35% positive rating) than the Democrats (26%). However, just over one in four (28%) non-partisan network sources -- such as voters, pundits, and reporters -- gave the Republicans a positive rating, while the Democrats received praise from 44%.

Example of positive non-partisan comment:

“Bill Clinton’s [economic plan] is closest to the truth.”
MIT economist Lester Thurow on ABC, September 20.

Example of negative non-partisan comment:

“George Bush’s civil rights record is less than pristine.”
CBS reporter Eric Engberg on September 23.

The study also found that the network news shows have devoted one-third of their airtime to the race since Labor Day. The Republicans received 2.8 hours of coverage, as much as the Democrats (1.7 hrs) and Perot (1.2) combined.

Policy issues (144 stories) have been discussed more than the "horse race" (101) this fall. Policy issue coverage reflected TV's emphasis on economic news. The recession was the issue most frequently addressed (46 stories), followed by taxes (44), the budget deficit (24), jobs (24), and health care (10).

Not surprisingly, "horse race" evaluations heavily favored the Clinton campaign. Assessments of the two parties' standings and prospects in the race for the presidency were 80% positive toward Clinton, but only 19% favorable toward Bush.

The **Center for Media and Public Affairs** is a non-partisan, non-profit research organization that conducts scientific analysis of news and entertainment media. This study is discussed in the current issue of the *Media Monitor*, the Center's monthly newsletter. Copies are available upon request.

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