

Republicans and Democrats see news bias only in stories that clearly favor the other party

November 1 2022, by Marjorie Hershey

Gazette of the United States.

NUMBER I.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 1789.

PRICE SIX PENCE.

PLANN GAZETTE OF THE UNITED STATES. A NATIONAL PAPER.

To be published at the seat of the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, and to comply, as fully as possible, the following Objects, viz.

I. EARLY and authentic Accounts of the PROCEEDINGS of CONGRESS—in LAWS, ACTS, and RESOLUTIONS, communicated to us to form an HISTORY of the TRANSACTIONS of the FEDERAL LEGISLATURE, under the NEW CONSTITUTION.

II. IMPARTIAL SKETCHES OF THE DEBATES OF CONGRESS.

III. ESSAYS upon the great Subjects of Government in general, and the Federal Legislature in particular; also upon the national and Federal Rights of the AMERICAN CITIZENS, as founded upon the Federal or State Constitutions; also upon every other Subject, which may appear suitable for newspaper discussion.

IV. A SERIES OF PARAGRAPHS, calculated to catch the PUBLIC EYE, and to point the publick attention to Objects that have an important reference to domestic, foreign, and publick happiness.

V. The Interests of the United States as connected with their Liberty, Education, Religion, and Moral Character—Improvements in Science, Arts, EDUCATION and HUMANITY—their foreign Trade, Alliances, Connections, &c.

VI. Every Piece of INTELLIGENCE, which may affect the national, agricultural, manufacturing, or political INTERESTS of the AMERICAN REPUBLIC.

VII. A CHAIN OF DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES, collected through the Medium of an extensive Correspondence with the respective States.

VIII. A SERIES OF FOREIGN ARTICLES OF INTELLIGENCE, to consist, as far as possible, of a general View of publick Affairs in the foreign Hemisphere.

IX. THE STATE OF THE NATIONAL FUNDS; also of the INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENTS—Courses of Exchange—Prices Current, &c.

CONDITIONS.

THE GAZETTE OF THE UNITED STATES shall be printed with the same Letters, and on the same Paper as this publication.

It shall be published every WEDNESDAY and SATURDAY, and delivered, as may be directed, to every Subscriber in the city, on these days.

The price to Subscribers (exclusive of postage) will be THREE DOLLARS per annum.

The first annual payment to be made in three months from the date of the first number.

Subscriptions may be made at the Office of the Editor, at No. 8, William-Street, and at No. 17, Maiden-Lane, near the Old-Bow-Shop, New-York.

N. B. By a new Arrangement made in the Stages, Subscribers at a distance will be duly furnished with papers.

Advertisements—A large insertion of every number will be struck off—so that Subscribers may always be accommodated with complete Sets.

To the PUBLICK.

AT this important Crisis, the ideas that fill the mind, are pregnant with Events of the greatest magnitude—to strengthen and complete the UNION of the States—to extend and protect their COMMERCE, under equal Treaties yet to be formed—to explore and arrange the NATIONAL FUNDS—to reform and establish the PUBLIC CREDIT—and ALL under the auspices of an united System of Government, will require the ENDEAVOURS of the Patriots and Sages of our Country—Hence the propriety of increasing the Medium of Knowledge and Information.

AMERICA, from this period, begins a new Era in her national existence—"THE WORLD IS ALL BEFORE US"—The wisdom and folly—the misery and prosperity of the EMPIRES, STATES, and KINGDOMS, which have had their day upon the great Theatre of Time, and are now no more, suggest the most important Mementos—Theft, with the rapid series of Events, in which our own Country has been so deeply interested, have taught the enlightened Citizens of the United States, that FREEDOM and GOVERNMENT—LIBERTY and LAWS, are inseparable.

This Conviction has led to the adoption of the New Constitution; for however various the Sentiments, respecting the MERITS of this System, all GOOD MEN are agreed in the necessity that exists, of an EFFICIENT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

A paper, therefore, established upon NATIONAL, INDEPENDENT, and IMPARTIAL PRINCIPLES—which shall take up the premised Articles, upon a COMPACT PLAN, it is presumed, will be highly interesting, and meet with publick approbation and patronage.

The Editor of this Publication is determined to leave no avenue of Information unexplored—He solicits the assistance of Persons of Leisure and abilities—which, united with his own assiduity, he flatters himself will render the Gazette of the United States not unworthy general encouragement—and is, with due respect, the publick's humble servant.

JOHN FENNO.

New-York, April 15, 1789.

EPITOME OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE UNION.

NEW-HAMPSHIRE, WHICH is 180 miles in length, and 60 in breadth, contained, according to an enumeration in 1787, 102,000 inhabitants—is attached to the federal Government—engaged in organizing her militia, already the best disciplined of any in the Union—encouraging the domestick arts—and looking forward to the benefits which will result from the operations of the New Constitution. New-Hampshire, from her local advantages, and the hardihood of her sons, may anticipate essential benefits from the operation of equal commercial regulations.

MASSACHUSETTS, 450 miles in length, and 160 in breadth, contained, according to an enumeration in 1787, 360,000 inhabitants—Since the tranquility of the State was restored by the suppression of the late insurrection, the whole body of the people appears solicitous for the blessings of peace and good government. If any conclusion can be drawn from elections for the Federal Legislature, this State has a decided majority in favour of the New Constitution. The great objects of Commerce, Agriculture, Manufactures, and the Fisheries, appear greatly to engage the attention of Massachusetts. Fabrication of Cotton, coarse Woollens, Linens, DUCK, IRON, Wood, &c. are profecting with success—and by diminishing her imports, and increasing her exports, she is advancing to that rank and importance in the Union which her extent of territory—her resources—and the genius and enterprise of her citizens entitle her to—and although the collision of parties, at the moment of Election, strikes out a few sparks of animosity, yet the decision once made, the "Calumet of Peace" is smoked in love and friendship—and the true Republicans they acquiesce in the choice of the Majority.

CONNECTICUT, 81 miles in length, and 57 in breadth, contained, agreeably to a Census in 1782, 200,150 inhabitants, enjoying a fertile soil, this truly republican State is pursuing her interest in the promotion of Manufactures, Commerce, Agriculture, and the Sciences—She appears to bid fair, from the peaceable, loyal, and federal Character of the great body of her citizens—from the Enterprise of her men of wealth, and other favourable circumstances, to attain to a great degree of opulence, power, and respectability in the Union.

NEW-YORK, 350 miles in length, and 200 in breadth, contained, agreeably to a Census in 1786, 238,897 inhabitants. This State appears to be convulsed by parties—but the CRISIS is at hand, when it is hoped, that the "Harbinger" will be buried. Exertions are on foot for making for the re-election of Gov. CLINTON, and on the other for the introduction of the Hon. Judge YATES to the chair—both parties appear sanguine as to their success. It is ardently to be wished, that temper and moderation may preside at the Elections; and there can be no doubt of it, as that Freedom, for which we fought and triumphed, depends so essentially upon a FREE CHOICE. It is greatly regretted, that this respectable and important member of the federal Republic, should not be represented in the Most Honourable Senate of the United States. New-York, however, is rising in her federal character, and in manufacturing, agricultural, and commercial consequence: Evident in her federal elections—her plans for promoting Manufactures, and the increase of her Exports.

NEW-JERSEY, 160 miles in length, and 52 in breadth, contained, by a Census in 1784, 149,435 inhabitants. This State is at present tranquil, although lately agitated by a very extraordinary contested election—which by a singly interference of the Executive, appears to be settled. The inhabitants of this State are warmly attached to the New Constitution—the blessings of peace, an equal trade, and good government, being properly prized by them. The Arts and Sciences are objects of importance in this State, and many of her sons rank high in the Republic of Letters.

PENNSYLVANIA, 288 miles in length, and 156 in breadth—by a Census in 1787, contained 360,000 inhabitants.—This extensive and truly respectable State, is making great proficiency in her Manufactures, Agriculture, Arts and Commerce. Her attachment to the New Constitution is unequivocal, and with a consistency highly honourary to her national character, she has lately made an effort, (which, though defeated for a time, will undoubtedly be successful) to conform their State Constitution to that of the Union. The publick buildings in the city of Philadelphia, have been respectfully offered for the accommodation of Congress. Theatrical exhibi-

tions are now permitted by law—and the city has been incorporated: Experience will determine the eligibility of the two latter transactions.

DELAWARE, 92 miles in length, and 16 in breadth, by a Census in 1787, contained 37,000 inhabitants. This State, though circumscribed in its limits, derives great importance from its rank in the Union—attached to the New Constitution, and having the honour to take the lead in its adoption, there is no doubt of its giving efficacy to its righteous administration.

MARYLAND, 124 miles in length, and 110 in breadth, by a Census taken in 1782, contained 253,630 inhabitants. From its favourable situation in the Union, this State bids fair for prosperity, wealth, and eminence. Warmly attached to the New Constitution, and enjoying a central situation, the publications there have teemed with tempting inducements to Congress, to make Baltimore the Seat of the Federal Legislature.

VIRGINIA, 758 miles in length, and 224 in breadth—by a census taken in 1782, contains 567,614 inhabitants. From the natural ardour of her sons in the cause of freedom, is frequently convulsed in her elections, and has been torn by factions—Possiding an extensive territory and a vast income, her funds are placed on a respectable footing; but as her representation in the federal legislature is decidedly attached to the union and the new constitution—there is now no doubt but that she will see her interest and glory finally connected with a few temporary sacrifices upon the principles of mutual concession.

SOUTH-CAROLINA, 500 miles in length, and 125 in breadth—and contains, by a census in 1787, 128,000 inhabitants, an important member of the union, has appeared lately to vibrate between opposing sentiments—Her attachment to national measures we doubt not will evidently discover itself when all tender laws and pretexts shall be done away. The prohibition of the importation of slaves, and the provision lately made for the reduction of her foreign debt are federal traits—add to these that their electors have given an unanimous vote for his Excellency GENERAL WASHINGTON, as President of the United States;—by which the memorable circumstance is authenticated, that the voice of the WHOLE CONTINENT has been raised in favour of FABRIZIUS MAXIMUS to rescue our country from impending ruin.

GEORGIA, 600 miles in length, and 250 in breadth,—by a Census in 1787, contained 98,000 inhabitants. This State is completing her federal character by conforming her state constitution to that of the union—and being the youngest branch of the family—and a frontier—she will doubtless experience the supporting and protecting arm of the federal government.

FOREIGN STATES.

RHODE-ISLAND, is 68 miles in length, and 40 in breadth, and by a Census taken in 1783, contained 51,809 inhabitants. This State has again refused to accede to a union with her sister States, and is now wholly estranged from them, and from appearances, will long continue so, unless the measure of the iniquity of her "KNOW YE" gentry should be speedily filled up—or the delusion which has so long infatuated a majority of her citizens should be removed.—Anxious of enjoying the protection of the union, the inhabitants of Newport, Providence and other places, are determined to sue for its protection, and to be annexed to Massachusetts or Connecticut. This dismemberment of the State it is to be desired, may be prevented by her being wholly grafted into that stock from whence through blindness she has been broken off.

NORTH-CAROLINA, is 758 miles in length, and 110 in breadth, and by a census taken in 1787, contained 270,000 inhabitants. A depreciated paper medium, and a deficiency of political knowledge, are considered as the causes of the antinational spirit of this State. Her extensive frontier, and being obliged to export the greater part of her productions through Virginia, it is expected will ere long evince the necessity of her acceding to the confederation. This indeed appears already to be the predominant idea of her citizens, by some recent transactions.

NOTE. Some of the foregoing Observations are transcribed from the Massachusetts Gazette, an excellent periodical publication of T. Trow and Co. Boston, now in the fourth month of its progress as a Candidate for literary patronage, and publick patronage. The Constitution of the States of the Federal States, is taken from Mr. J. AMERICAN GAZETTE, a new work, just published, which from its very useful and important contents, should be introduced into every family of the United States.

Thomas Jefferson described this partisan newspaper, The Gazette of the United States, as 'a paper of pure Toryism ... disseminating the doctrines of monarchy, aristocracy, and the exclusion of the people.' Credit: Library of Congress, Chronicling America collection

Charges of media bias—that "the media" are trying to brainwash Americans by feeding the public only one side of every issue—have become as common as campaign ads in the run-up to the midterm elections.

As a [political scientist](#) who has [examined media coverage of the Trump presidency and campaigns](#), I can say that this is what [social science research](#) tells us about media bias.

First, media bias is in the eye of the beholder.

Communications scholars have found that if you ask people in any community, using scientific polling methods, whether their local media are biased, you'll find that about half say yes. But of that half, typically a little more than a quarter say that their local media are biased against Republicans, and a little less than a quarter [say the same local media are biased against Democrats](#).

Research shows that Republicans and Democrats spot bias only in articles that clearly favor the other party. If an article tilts in favor of their own party, they tend to see it as unbiased.

Many people, then, define "bias" as "anything that doesn't agree with me." It's not hard to see why.

'Media' is a plural word

[American party politics has become increasingly polarized](#) in recent decades. Republicans have become more consistently conservative, and Democrats have become more consistently liberal to moderate.

As the lines have been drawn more clearly, many people have developed [hostile feelings toward the opposition party](#).

In a 2016 [Pew Research Center poll](#), 45% of Republicans said the Democratic Party's policies are "so misguided that they threaten the nation's well-being," and 41% of Democrats said the same about Republicans. A [poll conducted in midyear 2022 by Pew showed](#) that "72% of Republicans regard Democrats as more immoral, and 63% of Democrats say the same about Republicans."

Not surprisingly, media outlets have arisen [to appeal primarily to people who share a conservative view](#), or people who [share a liberal view](#).

That doesn't mean that "the media" are biased. There are hundreds of thousands of media outlets in the U.S.—newspapers, radio, network TV, cable TV, blogs, websites and [social media](#). These news outlets don't all take the same perspective on any given issue.

If you want a very conservative news site, it is not hard to find one, and the same with a very liberal news site.

First Amendment rules

"The media," then, [present a variety of different perspectives](#). That's the way a free press works.

The Constitution's First Amendment says Congress shall make no law limiting the freedom of the press. It doesn't say that Congress shall require all media sources to be "unbiased." Rather, it implies that as long as Congress does not systematically suppress any particular point of view, [then the free press can do its job](#) as one of the primary checks on a powerful government.

When the Constitution was written and for most of U.S. history, the major news sources—newspapers, for most of that time—[were explicitly biased](#). Most were sponsored by a [political party](#) or a partisan individual.

The notion of objective journalism—that media must report both sides of every issue in every story—barely existed until the late 1800s. It reached full flower only in the few decades when broadcast television, limited to three major networks, was [the primary source of political information](#).

Since that time, the media universe has expanded to include huge numbers of internet news sites, cable channels and social media posts. So if you feel that the media sources you're reading or watching are biased, you can read a wider variety of media sources.

If it bleeds, it leads

There is one form of actual media bias. Almost all media outlets need audiences in order to exist. Some can't survive financially without an audience; others want the prestige that comes from attracting a big audience.

Thus, the media define as "news" the kinds of stories that will attract an audience: those that feature drama, conflict, engaging pictures and immediacy. That's what [most people find interesting](#). They don't want to

read a story headlined "Dog bites man." They want "Man bites dog."

The problem is that a focus on such stories crowds out what we need to know to protect our democracy, such as: How do the workings of American institutions benefit some groups and disadvantage others? In what ways do our major systems—education, health care, national defense and others—function effectively or less effectively?

These analyses are vital to citizens—if we fail to protect our democracy, our lives will be changed forever—but they aren't always fun to read. So they get covered much less than celebrity scandals or murder cases—which, while compelling, don't really affect the ability to sustain a democratic system.

Writer Dave Barry demonstrated this media bias in favor of dramatic stories [in a 1998 column](#).

He wrote, "Let's consider two headlines. FIRST HEADLINE: 'Federal Reserve Board Ponders Reversal of Postponement of Deferral of Policy Reconsideration.' SECOND HEADLINE: 'Federal Reserve Board Caught in Motel with Underage Sheep.' Be honest, now. Which of these two stories would you read?"

By focusing on the daily equivalent of the underage sheep, media can direct our attention away from the important systems that affect our lives. That isn't the media's fault; we are the audience whose attention [media outlets](#) want to attract.

But as long as we think of governance in terms of its entertainment value and media bias in terms of Republicans and Democrats, we'll continue to be less informed than we need to be. That's the real [media bias](#).

This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative

Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

Provided by The Conversation

Citation: Republicans and Democrats see news bias only in stories that clearly favor the other party (2022, November 1) retrieved 17 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-11-republicans-democrats-news-bias-stories.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.