More About White Males From The Exit Polls
PUBLIC GIVES PRESS "C" GRADE FOR CAMPAIGN COVERAGE

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### North and Huffington Voters Particularly Critical

### PUBLIC GIVES PRESS "C" GRADE FOR CAMPAIGN COVERAGE

With few exceptions, American voters were not very pleased with the way the press covered the fall election campaign. Exit surveys, which questioned over 20,000 voters as they left the polling booth, found the media getting average or below average grades for its work on the midterm elections. Fewer than half of respondents in Times Mirror Center sponsored surveys in 11 of 12 states gave the press a "grade" of A or B for its election coverage. The news media only managed to get good grades from a majority of the voters for its coverage of the Massachusetts Senate race.

OVERALL RATING OF PRESS COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGNS (Based On Exit Poll Data)

	Percent Rated Excellent or Good ("A" or "B") %	Average Grade %
Massachusetts (Sen.)	56	C+ CCCCCCCCCC
New York (Gov.)	47	Č
Texas (Gov.)	46	Ċ
Maryland (Gov.)	44	Ċ
Connecticut (Gov.)	45	Ç
Florida (Gov.)	44	С
Arizona (Gov.)	40	С
New Jersey (Sen.)	39	С
Virginia (Sen.)	39	С
National (House Vote)	38	С
California (Sen.)	35	C- C- C-
Michigan (Sen.)	31	C-
Pennsylvania (Sen.)	30	C-

Despite reservations about press coverage more than two-thirds of voters said they learned enough from the election campaign to have made an informed choice among candidates. Voters who were pleased with what they learned from the campaign were more satisfied with the media coverage than those who felt ill informed. Voters who said they cast a ballot "for" a candidate rather than against his or her opposition were also more pleased with the press coverage than were "negative" voters. But still, the press's grade was no higher than C + even among these more upbeat segments of the electorate.

Reflecting the negative tone of the election, the poll found little relationship between feeling informed by the campaign and casting a negative vote. Those who voted against a candidate were about as likely to have felt informed by the campaign as people who voted "for" their choices.

Partisanship, Ideology and The Press

Even though the campaign was a great triumph for the GOP, Republicans were less satisfied with the press than Democrats. In every state, as well as in the nation as a whole, those who voted for Republican candidates were far more critical of the media than those who voted Democratic.

Nationally, conservative voters, supporters of the National Rifle Association, and those who had family values on their minds as they went into the voting booth were more critical of the press than other groups of voters.

While this was a national tendency reflecting a generic suspicion of the media by conservative voting blocs, supporters of Oliver North and Michael Huffington in their respective states gave much poorer grades to the media, probably because those candidates attacked the press harshly and regularly throughout their campaigns.

"North slammed the press at almost every opportunity," one reporter who covered the campaign said. "It's ironic, though, because if the Norfolk paper hadn't exposed Robb's partying, Robb would not have been vulnerable in the first place. Also only one important newspaper in the state, in Richmond, endorsed North."

"The press played a real role in defeating Huffington," a Southern California political editor said. The state press, as well as the national media, "ripped Huffington with exposes on his [undocumented alien] nanny and his wife's activities in a cult-like church, and he ran very hard in the final weeks against the media, as part of the 'liberal elites' even though a lot of big names in his own party disowned him. Only one paper -- in San Diego -- endorsed him. And he almost won." Added another California journalist: "Huffington was virtually unknown before the campaign, and the five major papers in the state vetted him. His supporters didn't like what they read, like him having to insist he was 'a carpet bagger, not a tax cheat.""

In Michigan and Pennsylvania, the voters gave below average grades to the media as a whole, but those who voted for the Republicans in the Senate races -- Spencer Abraham and Rick Santorum, respectively -- gave the press even worse marks.

"Abraham chided the 'liberal press' but didn't really campaign against us," said a Detroit political reporter, "maybe because some of our papers are to the right of *The Wall Street Journal*." Most Abraham voters were conservative white males, and his almost conscious identification with Rush Limbaugh positions -- on abortion, gun control, family values, incumbents -- indicated an anti-press bias, a Michigan pollster suggested. An upstate political editor saw a more negative attitude toward the press than his Detroit colleague, but speculated that criticism of the media was based on inadequate coverage of a multi-field Democratic primary and allegations by some women candidates that they got shorter shrift than men because of their gender.

In Pennsylvania, Republican Santorum did not run against the press as such, according to a Philadelphia reporter, but he and many of his supporters believed the media had made far too much of two gaffs their candidate made. One was to counter an attack from the widow of the late Republican Senator John Heinz by suggesting she was a very close personal friend of a Massachusetts Democrat, Sen. John Kerry. Santorum also suggested in passing that the retirement age should be raised to 70, which would help the Social Security system. "His people felt he got vicious treatment by the Philadelphia papers in particular," the writer said. A Pittsburgh political reporter thought the populist appeals of Santorum attracted a disproportion of voters hostile to the establishment, including the media.

Finally, those Massachusetts voters in the Senate race gave their media the best grades by far of any state. Even those who cast ballots for the losing Republican, Mitt Romney, rated the coverage higher than the national average, and those who supported Democrat Edward Kennedy were even more positive. "All in all, there were no cheap shots at the press up here. We had a real populist Democrat in 1990 who ran for governor against the press, and it went nowhere," a Boston political writer said in seeking a reason for the lower level of media criticism. "And on the positive side, the press this time, particularly the *Globe*, made a special effort to do informative pieces on whether the ads of each side were fair or not, and a lot of reader-friendly graphics."

#### More About White Males From The Exit Polls

Further analysis of exit polls indicates that the strong tilt of white males toward GOP candidates may reflect sociology as much as politics. White males who cast ballots for Republican congressional candidates were much more likely than male Democratic voters, *or even female Republican voters*, to call themselves conservatives. Accordingly, they were more concerned about taxes, more favorably disposed to the gun lobby, and more anti-Clinton than others. In contrast, white female Republican voters were distinguished from white males by expressing greater concern with family values. (See Table on page 12)

But beyond these political factors, the white male GOP phenomenon may be an expression of broader gender conflict. White men who voted for Republican candidates were *twice as likely* as other white men to think it unimportant that women be elected to office.

	White	White Males		emales	
	Voted Voted		Voted	Voted	
	<i>Dem.</i>	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.	
	%	%	%	%	
Importance Of Electing More Women To Office: Very Important Somewhat Important Not Important	25	9	51	18	
	48	34	37	47	
	27	<i>57</i>	12	34	

Turnout was another element in the importance of the white male vote in 1994. Times Mirror Center's pre-election surveys indicated that white males would make up a disproportionate share of the electorate. However it was not only their sheer numbers that made a difference, but also the political and social values of white males who went to the polls. Conservative Enterprisers and Moralists made up 45% of the white males who voted, compared to 27% of the white males who stayed home.

#### Survey Methodology

Survey findings are based on Times Mirror Center sponsored exit polls conducted by Mitofsky International.

The questions asked of respondents were:

- 1. Looking back over the Campaign, what grade would you give the press for the way it covered the U.S. (Senate/House/Governor) race?
  - A Excellent
  - B Good
  - C Passing
  - D Poor
  - F Failure
- 2. During this Campaign, did you learn enough about the candidates and the issues to make an informed choice for U.S. (Senate/House/Governor)?

Learned enough to choose

Did not learn enough; was difficult to choose

Sample size for the nationwide and the state polls shown on page 10 through 11.

### **TABLES**

### OVERALL RATING OF PRESS COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGNS

(Based On Exit Poll Data)

	$\boldsymbol{A}$	$\boldsymbol{\mathit{B}}$	$\boldsymbol{C}$	D	F	Average	
	Excellent	Good	Passing	Poor	Failing	$Grade^{I}$	N
	%	%	%	%	%		
Massachusetts 1325		13	43	29	9	4	3.45
New York	9	38	33	14	4	3.27	1349
Texas	11	35	34	14	5	3.26	1396
Maryland	7	37	37	13	4	3.22	1215
Connecticut	7	38	34	13	6	3.22	1421
Florida		9	35	34	15	5	3.20
1060 <i>Arizona</i> 1277		9	31	40	14	5	3.18
New Jersey	7	32	36	16	7	3.08	1090
Virginia	9	30	31	21	6	3.07	1529
National	7	31	34	17	8	3.02	5260
California	6	29	35	20	8	2.94	1069
Michigan	5	26	37	21	7	2.91	1218
Pennsylvania	5	25	37	22	7	2.86	1112

Question: Looking back over the Campaign, what grade would you give the press for the way it covered the U.S. (Senate/House/Governor) race?

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$ An "A" equals 5, "B" 4, "C" 3, "D" 2 and "F" 1.

# RATING OF PRESS COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGNS BY VOTE

(Based On Exit Poll Data)

	A	B	C	D	F
	Excellent	Good	Passing	Poor	Failing
	%	%	%	%	%
National (House):  Dem.  Rep.	9	35	33	13	6
	5	26	36	21	11
Massachusetts (Sen.) Kennedy (dem.) Romney (rep.)	16	45	26	7	3
	10	41	30	12	5
Virginia (Sen.) Robb (dem.) North (rep.) Coleman (ind.)	10	36	31	15	4
	8	23	29	28	10
	12	30	35	16	5
Arizona (Gov.)  Basha (dem.)  Symington (rep.)	10	32	38	14	5
	8	30	43	14	4
Florida (Gov.) Chiles (dem.) Bush (rep.)	10	40	37	8	4
	8	31	30	21	7
Maryland (Gov.) Glendening (dem.) Sauerbrey (rep.)	7 7	43 32	38 36	8 18	2 5
New York (Gov.)  Cuomo (dem.)  Pataki (rep.)  Golisano (ind.)	11	43	31	10	2
	8	34	35	16	5
	4	29	38	21	5
Texas (Gov.) Richards (dem.) Bush (rep.)	16	37	34	9	3
	6	32	34	18	8
California (Sen.) Feinstein (dem.) Huffington (rep.)	6	36	36	15	5
	6	22	35	25	10
Connecticut (Gov.) Curry (dem.) Rowland (rep.)	8	44	33	11	3
	6	32	36	15	9

	$\boldsymbol{A}$	B	C	D	F
	Excellent	Good	Passing	Poor	Failing
	%	%	%	%	%
Michigan (Sen.)					
Carr (dem.)	7	31	37	18	5
Abraham (rep.)	4	24	36	24	8
New Jersey (Sen.)					
Lautenberg (dem.)	7	35	37	15	3
Haytaian (rep.)	6	30	36	15	11
Pennsylvania (Sen.)					
Wofford (dem.)	5	31	33	21	5
Santorum (rep.)	5	21	40	22	10

Question: Looking back over the Campaign, what grade would you give the press for the way it covered the U.S. (Senate/House/Governor) race?

# RATING OF PRESS COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGNS BY DEMOGRAPHICS

(Based On Exit Poll Data)

		A Excellent	B Good	C Passing	D Poor	F Failing	N
Total		% 7	% 31	% 34	% 17	% 8	5260
Sex Male Female	7	7 36	25 31	38 16	18 7	11 2437	2294
Race White Black Hispanic		6 6 8	28 40 54	36 30 25	18 11 7	9 6 4	4497 449 138
Race/Sex White Males White Females Black Males Black Females		6 6 4 8	22 34 39 41	40 33 35 25	19 18 13 10	12 6 6 6	1989 2049 181 227
Age 18-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70+		9 4 6 7 9 6	39 26 29 29 33 33	33 35 33 37 33 35	11 22 19 16 14	6 11 8 9 8 6	626 1129 1238 881 837 509
Education College Grad. Some College H. S. Grad. < H.S. grad.		5 8 7 14	26 32 37 40	38 32 34 30	19 18 14 11	10 9 6 3	2013 1529 1194 263
Family Income \$75,000+ \$50,000-\$74,99 \$30,000-\$49,99 Under \$30,000	9	4 5 7 10	23 27 32 36	43 37 32 32	20 16 20 14	9 12 7 7	770 1023 1357 1646
Region East Midwest South West		7 5 9 6	28 29 33 33	35 36 36 30	19 19 14 17	9 9 6 10	1393 1318 1512 1037

	A Excellent %	B Good %	C Passing %	D Poor %	F Failing 1	N
Community Large Urban Small Urban Suburban Rural area	7 8 6 7	40 33 28 27	28 34 35 37	14 15 19 19	8 14 9 21	06  42  46  252
Party Identification Republican Democrat Independent	5 10 5	26 37 29	36 31 37	21 13 19	6 18	796 197 172
Political Ideology Liberal Moderate Conservative	10 7 6	37 33 24	32 36 34	14 15 23	7 24	58 108 158
1992 Presidential Vote Bush Clinton Perot	5 9 3	26 35 28	34 33 39	22 14 15	5 22	)80 243 00
Presidential Job Approv Approve Disapprove	val 9 5	36 27	33 35	14 20		27 665
1994 Congressional Voi Republican Democrat Other/Don't Know	te 5 9 4	26 35 32	36 33 37	21 13 12	6 23	647 809 25
Standard of Living Getting Better Getting Worse Staying the Same	8 6 7	35 25 31	35 35 35	14 20 17	12 11	17 97 377
Voting Blocs Born Again/Evangelical Married Parent (child < 18) No Health Ins. Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Employed Full-time Union Household NRA Supporter	7 6 5 9 11 6 8 6	31 29 30 33 17 28 30 28	33 36 35 31 38 36 37 34	19 17 19 17 20 18 15	9 35 10 17 9 70 13 13 9 28 8 10	44 557 68 01 33 667 978

Question: Looking back over the Campaign, what grade would you give the press for the way it covered the U.S. (Senate/House/Governor) race?

# LEARNED ENOUGH TO MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE/NEGATIVE VOTE

(Based On Exit Poll Data)

	Learned	Did Not Lear	n	Negative Vote	
	Enough	Enc	ough For	Cand. Agains	st Opp.
N					
	%	%	%	%	
National: By House Vote:	70	27	Not asked in	National Poll	5260
Dem.	70	26			
Rep.	73	26			
Other/No Answer	58	37			
Massachusetts 1325		89	9	71	26
By Vote for Senate:					
Kennedy (dem.)	89	9	82	15	
Romney (rep.)	89	9	59	40	
Other/No Answer	79	20			
Virginia By Vote for Senate:	82	15	59	38	1529
Robb (dem.)	83	14	56	41	
North (rep.)	83	12	68	30	
Coleman (ind.)	77	23	37	63	
Other/No Answer	53	33			
Arizona 1277		82	16	72	26
By Vote for Governor:					
Basha (dem.)	79	20	72	25	
Symington (rep.)	86	12	73	26	
Other/No Answer	67	28			
Florida		79	18	57	41
1060					
By Vote for Governor:	00	40	50	4.4	
Chiles (dem.) Bush (rep.)	80 78	16 19	56 57	41 40	
Other/No Answer	67	30	57	40	
Other/140 / thewer	07	00			
Maryland	80	18	68	30	1215
By Vote for Governor:	00	40	60	20	
Glendening (dem.) Sauerbrey (rep.)	80 81	18 17	69 67	29 32	
Other/No Answer	59	26	07	32	
New York	79	19	54	42	1349
By Vote for Governor:		10	<b>5</b> -	12	10-10
Cuomo (dem.)	81	16	66	31	
Pataki (rep.)	77	21	44	52	
Golisano (ind.)	72	21	44	48	
Other/No Answer	68	26			

N	Learned Enough	Did Not Learn Enoi		Negative Vote Cand. Again.	
1 <b>v</b>	%	%	%	%	
Texas By Vote for Governor:	80	19	74	24	1396
Richards (dem.)	78	21	82	17	
Bush (rep.)	82	17	66	31	
Other/No Ánswer	70	27			
California By Vote for Senate:	72	23	Not asked	in Sen. race	1069
Feinstein (dem.)	72	22			
Huffington (rep.)	76	21			
Other/No Answer	51	36			
Connecticut By Vote for Governor:	75	23	71	26	1421
Curry (dem.)	75	24	67	29	
Rowland (rep.)	78	20	71	27	
Other/No Answer	72	26			
Michigan By Vote for Senate:	73	24	Not asked	in Sen. race	1218
Carr (dem.)	71	27			
Abraham (rep.)	78	20			
Other/No Answer	53	35			
New Jersey By Vote for Senate:	73	24	62	35	1090
Lautenberg (dem.)	77	20	71	26	
Haytaian (rep.)	73	25	52	45	
Other/No Answer	49	47			
Pennsylvania By Vote for Senate:	70	26	60	36	1112
Wofford (dem.)	68	27	62	33	
Santorum (rep.)	73	25	57	39	
Other/No Answer	62	31			

During this Campaign, did you learn enough about the candidates and the issues to make an informed choice for U.S. (Senate/House/Governor)? Question:

Would you say that your vote for (Senator/Representative/Governor) was more a vote for your candidate or more a vote against his or her opponent? Question:

## DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS BY RACE AND GENDER

(Based On Exit Poll Data)

		WHITE MALES Voted Voted			WHITE FEMALES Voted Voted		
	Total	All	Dem.		All	Dem.	
VOTING BLOCS: Born Again/Evangelical							
Christian Attend Religious Services	27	23	15	27	26	12	36
At Least Once A Week	45	40	34	44	47	39	54
Union Household	25	26	36	21	20	27	14
NRA Supporter Voted for Perot	36	49	34	58	30	20	38
In 1992	13	19	15	21	12	10	15
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY:							
Liberal	17	13	28	4	20	35	8
Moderate	47 34	43 44	56 15	35 60	49	54	44 45
Conservative	34	44	15	00	30	10	45
ISSUES MATTERED MOST IN VOTING:							
Crime	38	39	37	40	35	36	35
Health Care	22	17	29	11	24	36	16
Family Values/Morality	19	18	8	24	23	10	32
Taxes	22	31	17	39	21	13	26
VOTE FOR/AGAINST CLINTON:							
In Support	27	19	50	2	25	54	3
Against	33	45	9	66	32	4	54
Nothing to do with	39	34	39	32	41	41	41
WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT: Having New Faces in							
Office	26	36	23	43	21	16	24
Having Experienced People in Office	68	60	74	52	73	78	69