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Today's Washington Press Corps More Digital, Specialized

*D.C.-based newspaper staff focus on Congress, but wire services
account for most of what readers see*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THIS REPORT:**

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About Pew Research Center

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Terminology

Terms associated with the accounting of journalists who make up the Washington press corps:

“Washington press corps” refers to the group of journalists based in Washington, D.C., covering the federal government.

“Niche outlets” are news organizations that offer specialized coverage of a specific topic or group of closely related topics.

“Broad-interest websites” offer a wide range of news, from politics to sports, for a general audience.

“Digital-native” news outlets are those whose first place of publication was on the web, as opposed to legacy media organizations that developed a web presence after the consumer internet became available. Digital-native news outlets can be either broad-interest, such as The Huffington Post, or niche, such as Kaiser Health News.

The “Congressional Directory,” made available during the first session of each new Congress, is the official directory of the U.S. Congress. Included in the directory are the lists of the journalists accredited to the Press, Radio and Television, and Photographers’ galleries, defined below.

- The “U.S. Senate Press Gallery” accredits individual journalists who represent daily newspapers, wire services or online publications to cover the U.S. Congress. These journalists are granted access to the gallery and the rest of the Capitol complex.
- The “U.S. Senate Periodical Press Gallery” accredits journalists who represent magazines, newsletters, non-daily newspapers and some online publications to cover the U.S. Congress. Throughout the report, this group is referred to as the Periodical Gallery.
- The “U.S. Senate Radio & Television Correspondents Gallery” accredits journalists and other news personnel who represent television and radio outlets to cover the U.S. Congress. Throughout the report, this group is referred to as the Radio and Television Gallery.

- The “U.S. Senate Press Photographers’ Gallery” accredits press photographers working for newspapers, news magazines, wire services and photo agencies to cover the U.S. Congress. Throughout the report, this group is referred to as the Photographers Gallery.

Terms associated with the analysis of federal government news coverage in eight newspapers:

“D.C.-based staff reporters” are journalists who work for one of the newspaper studied and are stationed in Washington D.C.

“Other national media” denotes a national news organization whose coverage appears in one of the local papers studied, such as The New York Times or The Washington Post. Wire services are counted separately.

“Primary impact” is a concept used in the analysis of newspaper content to identify instances where the action that is the focus of the story is directly linked, by the author, to some group or institution. For instance, a story where the primary impact is “citizens” would explore how citizens’ circumstances will somehow be changed by new legislation in Congress.

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Today's Washington Press Corps More Digital, Specialized

D.C.-based newspaper staff focus on Congress, but wire services account for most of what readers see

The story of who is covering federal government is a striking illustration of the shifting power dynamics within American journalism at large.

Reporters for niche outlets, some of which offer highly specialized information services at premium subscription rates, now fill more seats in the U.S. Senate Press Gallery than do daily newspaper reporters. As recently as the late 1990s, daily newspaper staff outnumbered such journalists by more than two-to-one.

Also increasing in number are reporters for digital news publishers – some of which focus on niche subjects, others on a broad range of general interest topics. In 2009, fewer than three dozen journalists working for digital-native outlets were accredited to the Press Gallery. By 2014, that number had risen to more than 130 – roughly a four-fold increase.

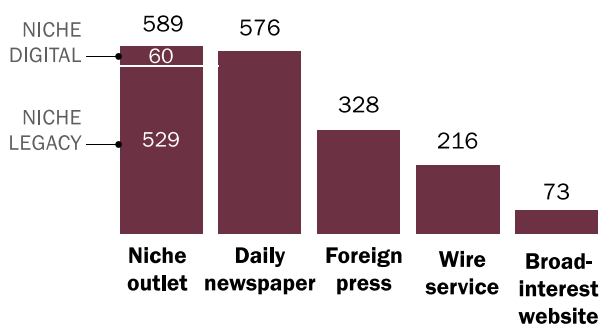
At the same time though, between 2009 and 2014, 19 local newspapers disappeared from the Press Gallery books, reducing the number of states with any local newspaper staff on the Hill from 33 to 29. Since those 2014 figures were tallied, other papers have turned out the lights in Washington, closing their bureau or simply electing not to replace an outgoing correspondent.

In the Washington press corps, niche, digital media expand as print scales back

Four U.S. Senate galleries accredit journalists to cover Congress. This analysis focuses on the Press Gallery.



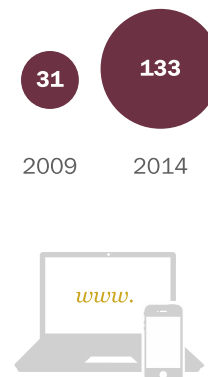
of journalists accredited by the Press Gallery in 2014 from each media sector



% of journalists accredited by the Press Gallery



of journalists for all digital-native outlets accredited by Press Gallery



Source: Congressional Directory, 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

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Some local papers have reestablished a presence in Washington – eight, between 2009 and 2014. And a handful of the digital start-ups with correspondents in Washington are locally-oriented. However, the rolls of the Regional Reporters Association – a group of Washington-based reporters that produce local and regional coverage – sit at 59 in 2015, down from around 200 in the mid-1990s.

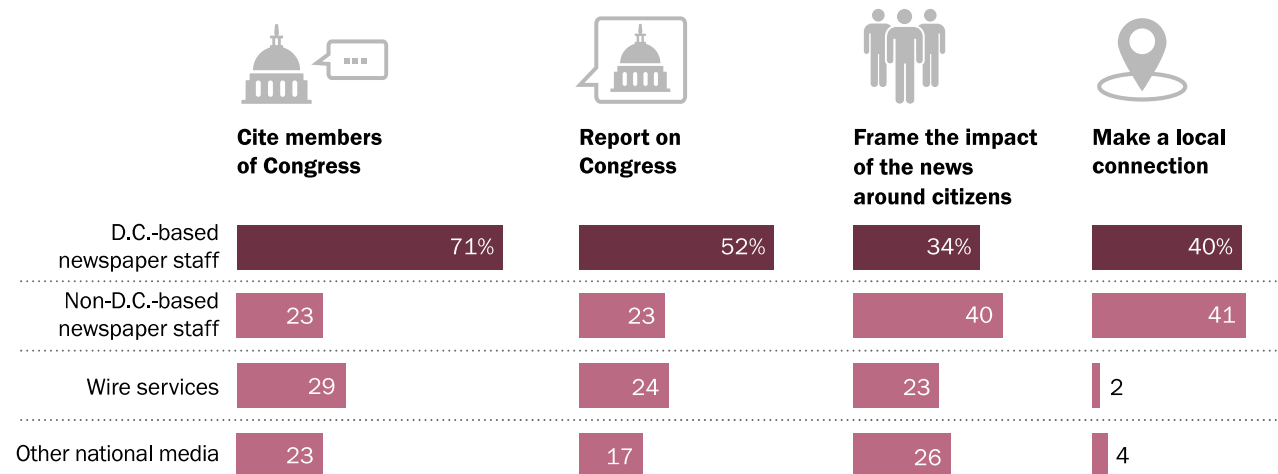
For the American public, this translates to more digital options for coverage at the national level as well as options for those who have access to trade publications and specialized information products, but also a continuous chipping away at the number of reporters on the Hill covering the federal government on behalf of local communities.

What do these changes mean for the news delivered to readers back home? Do residents served by newspapers with correspondents in D.C. receive a different level of reporting about the activities of federal government and how they relate to local life than those without?

In an attempt to shed light on this question, Pew Research Center systematically studied coverage of the federal government in eight local newspapers from across the U.S., four with a D.C. reporter and four without, over a period of four months. The goal was to use this snapshot of reporting on Washington to get a sense of the ways that coverage from Washington-based correspondents might differ from coverage coming from newspaper staff not stationed in D.C., wire services or other national media. Among the other dimensions studied were how often correspondents cover

Washington-based newspaper staff stay focused on Congress but often not in a way that connects the news back to citizens

% of newspaper stories produced by each group that...



Source: Content analysis conducted during the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership.

Congress, use a Congressional source in their stories, frame the impact of the news they cover around citizens, or make a local connection between events in the capital and the communities served by the papers themselves. This report was made possible by The Pew Charitable Trusts, which received support for this study from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The findings of this content analysis reveal that coverage by D.C.-based reporters stays more closely tethered to the institution and work of Congress than other reporting in the papers studied, usually with direct quotes from members of Congress. But there are also signs that these reporters are often Beltway-focused, with a tendency to keep the emphasis of the stories aimed at the government and in a way that does not tie the significance of the news back to the local community. But perhaps of more importance to the reader overall is that of all the coverage about federal government appearing in these papers, the portion that comes from D.C. based-reporters accounts for less than 10%. Instead, the greatest portion of federal government coverage by far comes from wire service stories.

From February through May of 2015, the period for which these newspapers were studied, about seven-in-ten stories produced by D.C. correspondents (71%) contained a quote from a member of Congress. That is three times the rate of other newspaper staff reporters who were not based in D.C. Further, about three-in-ten stories (28%) from D.C.-based staff cited national politicians on both sides of the political aisle, seven times that of stories from their colleagues outside the beltway.

At the same time, though, nearly half (45%) of stories from these D.C.-based correspondents were written in a way that mainly addressed the impact on the government or individual politicians, such as a story about Obama's request for U.S. troops to combat ISIS, which focused mainly on relations between the president and Congress. Only about a third (34%) of stories focused mainly around the impact on citizens.

Wire services key source of federal government news

Among newspapers that have/don't have a D.C. correspondent, % of stories about federal government that come from...

	Wire services	Other national media	Non-D.C. staff	D.C.-based staff	TOTAL STORIES
Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent	52%	22	18	8	1,304
Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	62%	19	20	NA	1,490

Source: Content analysis conducted during the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership. Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding.

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In comparison, reporting by non-D.C. based staff, such as those covering Washington activities from home, was more likely to discuss the impact on citizens (40%) and less likely to focus on government or politicians (27%).

The two cohorts of staff reporters studied in this analysis were roughly equal in the portion of coverage that somehow makes a connection to the local community, whether to local businesses, government entities or residents, at about 40% each. That suggests then, that D.C. based staff are about as likely as non-D.C. staff to find a local lens to the news but are less likely to tie it directly to what it means for citizens.

To be sure, local connections are nearly absent from the stories produced by wire services and other national media, which are themselves not connected to the local area in any way. Coverage from these sources was also somewhat less likely than other coverage to focus on the impact to citizens, instead offering a wider mix of the impact on citizens, the U.S. government and countries outside the U.S.

In addition, news events themselves will not always make for a direct opportunity to explore the citizen angle. There are certainly situations where the impact of news on some other actor or institution besides the public is a critical component. Yet, at least among some correspondents, there is a sense of duty to make Washington relevant to citizens. “If Washington already seems remote, certainly regional reporters can play a role in making it a little closer, a little more understandable,” said James R. Carroll, former Washington bureau chief for The Louisville Courier-Journal.

When looking at how these different types of reporting add up in sheer volume for readers, wire stories carry the weight, both in the papers with and without D.C. correspondents. Fully 52% of the federal government stories produced by papers supporting a D.C. correspondent came from wire services – more than six times that of the 8% of coverage coming from D.C. reporters. Stories from D.C. reporters were also less than half as prevalent as stories produced by other staff writers (18%) or other news outlets (22%). Papers without a D.C. reporter produced about the same amount of coverage, with wire services playing an even more critical role – providing 62% of all coverage about the federal government.

Some of this may speak to the practical limitations of what any one correspondent can do, as many newspapers with any kind of Washington presence today get by with just one correspondent. Indeed, stories from wire services often provide insights into international affairs or the activities of other federal agencies.

And there is some evidence of additional impact that a newspaper with its own D.C. correspondent may have beyond just the raw number of stories produced by that designated staff. Articles produced by D.C. correspondents are more likely than others to be placed on Page One, appearing in front of even casual readers, and they also tend to be longer. And these papers are more likely to publish stories by other staff with D.C. bylines.

In assessing the influence of these dwindling D.C.-based newspaper correspondents, it is clear that they keep a close and consistent eye on Congress. And it may be that the most important results of their labor are also the most difficult to quantify: the potential influence they may wield through the mere fact that a Senator knows his or her actions are being reported back to voters, the deep institutional knowledge a correspondent accrues over time, and the relationships a correspondent may form with those who pull the power levers. Sometimes, the impact comes from simply being in plain sight. The question is whether in trying to do more with fewer resources in an increasingly fast-paced news environment, while at the same time trying not to “get sucked into [the Washington] bubble,” as D.C. correspondent Matt Laslo puts it, what they are able to deliver to readers back home accomplishes the difficult work of connecting communities to their federal government.

This analysis builds from [a study](#) produced by Pew Research Center in 2009, which examined the makeup of the Washington press corps from 1985 through 2009, chronicling the rise of niche and foreign press, as well as the decline of legacy media in Washington over the course of several decades. This study examines the changes in that makeup since 2009 and adds a study of coverage in newspapers with and without a D.C.-based correspondent. More details about the methodology are provided [here](#).

1. The journalists covering Washington and whom they work for

The cohort of journalists covering Washington affairs, from Congress to the White House and other federal agencies, continues to evolve.

Reporters working for specialty publications often catering to elite audiences, labeled “niche” outlets in this report, have risen in number. So too have journalists working for publications that were born on the web – newer arrivals to the capital – called “digital-native” outlets here.

Meanwhile, the number of journalists working for daily newspapers has continued to dwindle, though not as dramatically as during and after the recession of 2008.

This analysis updates [a study](#) produced by Pew Research Center in 2009. Since that time, the total size of the Washington press corps has changed relatively little, though the ranks of those who fill the Senate galleries continue to change.

The makeup of today’s Washington press corps

of U.S.-based journalists accredited by the Press Gallery to cover Congress

	Niche outlet	Daily newspaper	Foreign press	Wire service	Broad-interest website	NET
2014	589	576	328	216	73	1,782
2009	500	608	334	214	2	1,658

Source: U.S. Senate Press Gallery, 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

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Newspaper staff once dominated Press Gallery ranks

of journalists accredited by the Press Gallery to cover Congress

	2008	1998	1986
Daily newspaper	765	859	734
Wire service	247	168	201
Niche outlet	480	335	n/a
Total	1,492	1,362	935

Source: U.S. Senate Press Gallery, 110th Congress (August 2008), 105th Congress (June 1997), 99th Congress.

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2. The numbers overall

According to data from the four Senate galleries, which accredit journalists to cover Congress, roughly 6,800 news personnel have at least one foot in the Capitol, an increase from a little more than 6,500 in 2009.

These journalists – domestic and foreign – represent a range of news organizations including daily newspapers, wire services, niche outlets (listed in the Press Gallery), magazines (listed in the Periodical Gallery), as well as trade press and broad-interest website startups (listed in both). The Radio and Television Gallery accredits more news personnel than the

press and periodicals galleries combined, in large part because their ranks include producers, videographers and photographers in addition to reporters. Finally, photographers – some belonging to news agencies, others to individual publications – are accredited in their own gallery, which is substantially smaller in number than the others.

Whether a publication fits in one gallery or another is influenced by both the gallery’s criteria and a news publisher’s request. In addition, there may well be some non-local reporters or organizations in Washington who cover federal government events without access to restricted press areas. But these numbers do capture the officially accredited mix of individuals reporting about government activity day to day.

Most of this analysis draws upon the Press Gallery figures, where the bulk of daily reporting about Washington occurs on behalf of local communities, most often through daily newspapers. The Press Gallery, in addition, offers in some ways the best view into the most dramatic changes in the Washington press corps in recent years, with declines in daily print newspaper staff and growth in niche outlets and digital sites.

Number of news staff in Washington inches upward

of journalists accredited to cover Congress by each Senate gallery

Senate Gallery	2009	2014	% change
Press	1,658	1,782	+7
Periodicals	1,282	1,221	-5
Radio and Television	3,355	3,559	+6
Photographers	249	254	+2
Total	6,544	6,816	+4

Source: Congressional Directory, 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

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3. The further rise of niche and digital media

As legacy print media continue to scale back their presence on the Hill, niche and digital media have expanded.

According to analysis of data from the Senate Press Gallery, 662 journalists from niche outlets and broad-interest websites were accredited to the Gallery in 2014, a number that increased by about one-third (32%) from 2009 levels.

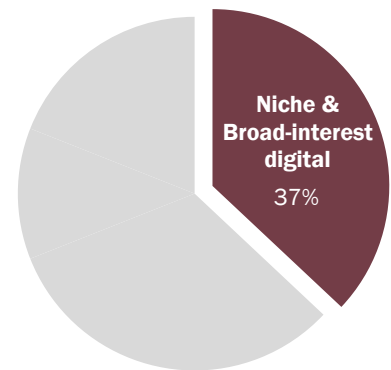
Together, those journalists account for fully 37% of the 1,782 news staff accredited to the Press Gallery – a greater portion of the total than either newspapers or wire services.

Some outlets represented in this group are both niche and digital-native, while others are niche with a legacy platform like print, and still others are digital-native with a broad interest focus. Together the group amounts to 662 reporters, but it is also worth breaking this down into the three sub-groups: reporters for broad-interest websites, for niche digital-native and then for niche overall.

Reporters for broad-interest news websites have only emerged in the Washington press corps in recent years. These are outlets such as The Huffington Post and BuzzFeed that publish on a daily basis and aim for a general audience. All told, 73 journalists working for such an organization were accredited to the Press Gallery in 2014 (in 2009, just two journalists who were working for a broad-interest website – The Huffington Post – were accredited to cover Congress). Some of these sites [reach tens of millions](#) of visitors per month. The Huffington Post alone increased its accredited staff in Washington to 39 in 2014, operating out of a bureau on Pennsylvania Avenue, across from the White House, after starting out in a row house in Dupont Circle. “I think there’s a bit of a renaissance going on,” said the organization’s Washington bureau chief, Ryan Grim, about the bumper crop of digital publishers that have now planted a flag in Washington.

Niche and digital reporters covering Washington

% of total news staff accredited to Senate Press Gallery



Source: U.S. Senate Press Gallery, 113th Congress (February 2014)

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There's been more growth even since the 2014 Press Gallery was published. The Daily Beast and The Texas Tribune are among the digital publishers that have had staff newly accredited to the Gallery as of 2015.¹ Vice Media, while originally launched as a print magazine in 1994, created a digital news brand called Vice News in 2013; its staff members were also added to the Press Gallery after the 2014 list was published.

Another group of digital journalists report for niche digital-native sites – a total of 60 in 2014, double the 29 in 2009. These journalists work

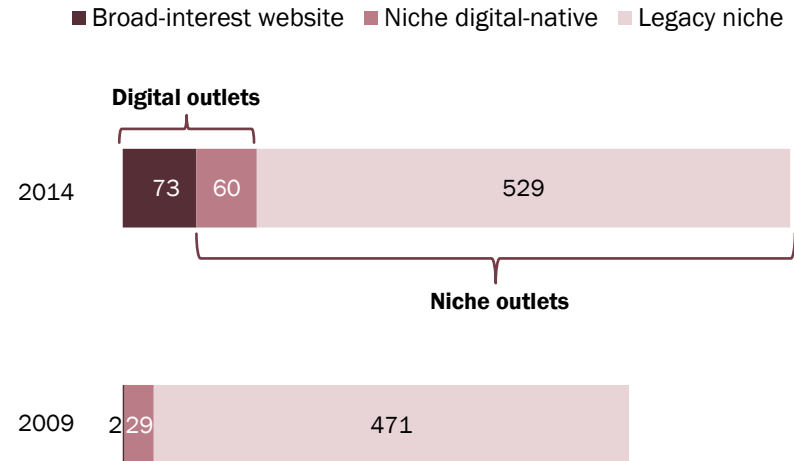
for publishers that focus on a single niche topic, yet even among these, most are public facing, such as Kaiser Health News or Inside Higher Ed.

In total then, by 2014, 133 accredited reporters worked for a digital-native outlet, either broad-interest in nature or focused on a niche topic, a four-fold increase from 2009 levels when 31 journalists working for any kind of digital outlet were accredited to the Hill.

There is also another group of journalists not in the Press Gallery at all, but housed within the Periodical Gallery – a separate list compiled by the Senate staff. One notable example here is Politico, which more than doubled its accredited Washington staff from 43 to 112 between 2009 and 2014. Talking Points Memo and Townhall – two politics websites with no accredited staff in 2009 – had a combined 19 in 2014. Newer entrants in the past year include Vox Media, which launched Vox.com at its Washington headquarters in 2014.

Niche and digital outlets expand presence on the Hill

of digital and niche outlets news staff accredited by the Press Gallery



Source: U.S. Senate Press Gallery, 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

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¹ The Texas Tribune receives funding for its Washington bureau from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, which also provided support for this study.

For all the additions to the Washington press corps, however, few of these journalists work for digital-native publications whose mission is to serve a local community. Some online publications, many of them nonprofit, have started sending a correspondent to Washington, including MinnPost and Connecticut Mirror and now, The Texas Tribune (The St. Louis Beacon had maintained its own presence in Washington before merging with St. Louis Public Radio). But these amount to a small fraction of the total number of journalists staffing digital news operations more generally, which often focus on national politics rather than the local or regional implications of what happens inside the Beltway.

Another way of looking at the data is to consider the rise of niche outlets as a whole, in which there is some overlap with the digital outlets described above.

As of 2014, there were 589 accredited journalists working for a niche outlet – covering topics such as finance, energy or a specific government agency. This is more than the 500 in 2009 and is up by 76% since 1997, according to our [earlier research](#) on this topic. Some work for newer digital outlets, described above. Others are more established legacy organizations. And many work for trade publications, which were discussed in detail in a [2015 article](#) by the Washington Monthly. These publishers continue to fill the Press Gallery with reporters and jockey for market share in a highly competitive environment. In a few notable cases, the big have gotten bigger: Bloomberg News went from having 116 reporters accredited to the Press Gallery in 2009 to 193 in 2014. Even here, though, change continues apace; in 2015, Bloomberg announced staff cuts at its Washington bureau.

4. Newspapers and wire services: a strained link from Washington to local communities

After a period of cutbacks that reached a fever pitch around 2008, the decline of legacy media’s Washington presence didn’t stop. Instead, there continued a quiet retreat, with newspapers reducing their ranks on the Hill and in some cases, closing bureaus.

Total daily newspaper staff declined by 5% between 2009 and 2014; the reporting staff for smaller local papers decreased even more. The staff of mainstream wire services, which provide a large share of local communities’ news about national affairs, remained flat.

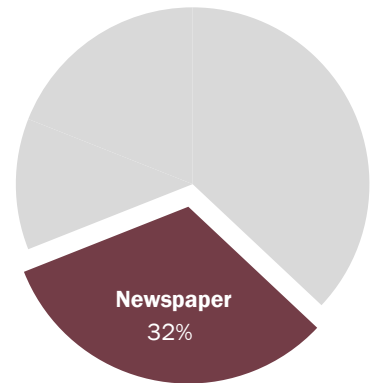
Daily newspapers

Daily newspapers, already cut to the bone, have by no means disappeared from the Washington press corps. But their presence has continued to winnow. According to the Press Gallery, there were 576 daily newspaper staff accredited to the Hill as of 2014, the most recent data available. That is down from 608 in 2009 and from a peak of more than 800 in the late 1990s. Altogether, newspaper staff on the Hill accounted for 32% of all journalists accredited to the Press Gallery in 2014, down slightly from 37% in 2009.

During the 1997-98 Congress, 859 daily newspaper reporters were accredited to cover the Hill, a number more than twice that of reporters for niche outlets, which totaled 335 at that time. By 2014, there were more niche reporters (589) than newspaper reporters (576) in the gallery.

Newspaper reporters covering Washington

% of total news staff accredited to the Senate Press Gallery



Source: U.S. Senate Press Gallery, 113th Congress (February 2014)

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Shifts felt among accredited newspaper staff

of daily newspaper reporters accredited to the Senate Press Gallery

Year	Corporate bureau (i.e. Gannett)	Nat'l daily paper (i.e. USA Today)	Nat'l daily paper with local coverage (i.e. NY Times)	Local daily paper (i.e. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)	Freelance/syndicates
2009	81	131	263	126	7
2014	80	170	204	112	10

Source: U.S. Senate Press Gallery, 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

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During the most recent five-year period studied (2009-14), newspaper staff declines in Washington were felt slightly more heavily by individual local papers than large national papers. Among these large, primarily national papers – some of which cover chiefly national affairs, such as USA Today – and others that focus heavily on local affairs as well, such as The New York Times, the story was mixed. Some increased their accredited Washington staff, while others scaled back during the time period studied.

Among smaller daily papers though (referred to in this report as local daily papers), whose correspondents cover Washington on behalf of their communities in the states, the numbers decreased by 11%.²

In addition, slightly fewer states are now served by a local daily newspaper reporter today than was the case five years earlier. In 2009, 125 accredited reporters covered Washington for local daily newspapers in 33 states. By 2014, that number had dropped to 111 reporters in 29 states. In some cases, this meant a Washington bureau of five became a bureau of three or four. But *in other cases*, a paper ended its presence in Washington altogether. Between 2009 and 2014, 19 local newspapers, together representing 16 states, had disappeared from the Press Gallery list, though in that space of time, eight papers established or reestablished their presence in Washington by sending someone new to the Hill. And since that time, more papers have closed or not filled their bureaus, including The Louisville Courier-Journal and The Orange County Register. Altogether, as of 2014, 29 states had a local newspaper correspondent based in Washington, down from 33 in 2009.

Fewer daily newspaper reporters in D.C.

of reporters, states covered in Press Gallery

Year	Local daily paper staff	States covered	National daily/local paper staff	States covered
2009	125	33	263	1 & D.C.
2014	111	29	204	1 & D.C.

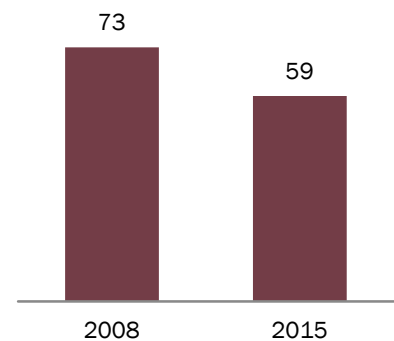
Source: U.S. Senate Press Gallery, 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

Note: Puerto Rico's El Nuevo Dia not included in this analysis.

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Regional reporting membership rolls decline

of members at the Regional Reporters Association



Source: Regional Reporters Association

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² This tally includes staff affiliated with regional daily newspapers; as such, the numbers here do not include national outlets such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal or USA Today. Nor do they include newspapers based in the District of Columbia, or U.S. protectorates such as Guam or Puerto Rico.

Two other data sources reinforce the strain on local reporting power, traditionally a stronghold of daily newspapers. The Regional Reporters Association (RRA) – an organization for journalists who cover the nation’s capital on behalf of communities outside of Washington – has 59 members on its list as of 2015, down from 73 in 2008. And that number is down from the roughly 200 members that belonged to the group in the mid-1990s.

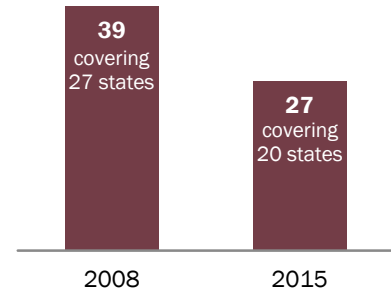
Hudson’s Washington News Media Contacts Directory has also charted the decline of bureaus in Washington. In 2015, the number of daily newspapers with their own Washington bureau was down to 27 from 39 in 2008, a decline of nearly one-third. The number of states that were served by such a bureau went from 27 to 20 during the same period.

While the decrease in bureaus points to a larger pattern, the necessity of a brick and mortar office space itself is under reconsideration by some Washington correspondents, especially those who operate alone. “I actually do my job, I think, more efficiently from home, because I live on Capitol Hill,” said Mike Coleman, who covers Washington for the Albuquerque Journal.

And while many communities are still served by a newspaper that draws upon a corporate parent’s Washington bureau for coverage, these are fewer in number as well. In 2008, 262 papers were served by the Washington bureau of a corporate parent, according to data from Hudson’s. By 2015, that number had dropped to 198, as companies such as Advance Publications [folded their operations](#).

Washington bureaus and states they serve decline further

of daily newspaper bureaus in Washington



Note: Analysis does not include papers based in Washington, D.C., or U.S. protectorates, or papers that focus generally on national affairs.

Source: Hudson’s Washington News Media Contacts Directory, 2008, 2015

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Wire services

Mainstream wire services (The Associated Press and Reuters), which provide much of the national reporting that appears in [local papers around the country](#), held steady during the five years studied, with a combined 216 reporters accredited to the Press Gallery. That amounts to 12% of the total number of journalists accredited to the Press Gallery, which is about the same as it was in 2009 when wire services accounted for 13%.

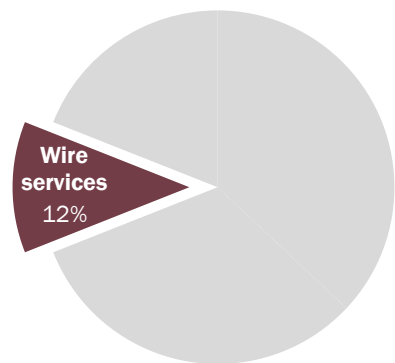
Wire services have maintained a foothold on the Hill and serve a critical role by supplying copy for newspapers and other publishers around the country. This report's content analysis reveals that, in a sample of eight daily newspapers, wire services accounted for nearly six-in-ten of all stories about national government coverage appearing over a roughly four-month period. The majority, though not all, of the wire content appearing in these papers came from The Associated Press – an organization which, according to the most recent data from the Senate Press Gallery, accounted for 121 of the 1,782 reporters accredited to cover Congress.

What is not clear in the data is the orientation of these journalists – specifically, the extent to which some serve particular states and regions around the country, monitor the committee activities and votes of specific members of Congress, or track the decisions made at specific agencies which might have implications for communities outside the Beltway. The Press Gallery lists include journalists' names, but not their assignments. Detailed information was not found on the AP's website. And multiple attempts to obtain information directly from the AP Washington bureau were unsuccessful. There is some suggestion in the content analysis that most are nationally focused, or at least produce nationally oriented coverage, as the vast majority of wire stories carried in the newspapers studied did not contain a local angle.

Whether national or regional in scope, it is clear that at least in local newspapers, they play an outsized role in delivering news about federal government.

Mainstream wire service reporters covering Washington

% of total news staff accredited to Senate Press Gallery



Source: U.S. Senate Press Gallery, 113th Congress (February 2014)

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5. Foreign press on the Hill – a slight decline

After several years of buildup, foreign news organizations have leveled off their investment in Washington journalism, and in some areas, have scaled back.

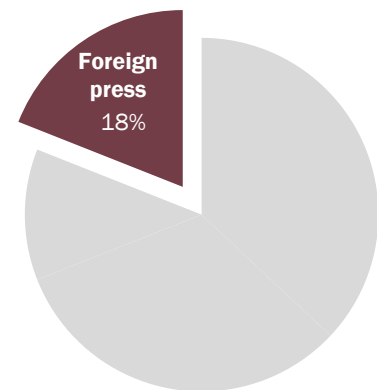
There are two main organizations that provide information on the number of foreign journalists based in Washington. One is the Senate Press Gallery, which accredits journalists working for foreign news organizations specifically to cover Congress. The other is the U.S. State Department’s Foreign Press Center in Washington (FPC), which credentials a wide range and substantially larger number of foreign journalists in Washington, covering issues well beyond Congress. While this report utilizes data from that both sources, the primary source used is the Press Gallery – which provides a figure that is more comparable to the number of journalists for other kinds of organizations, such as daily newspapers.

According to data from the Press Gallery, the number of foreign journalists accredited to cover Congress decreased slightly, by 2%, between 2009 and 2014, to a total of 328. Foreign journalists working for organizations such as Agence France-Presse, Asahi Shumbun and Saudi Press Agency now account for 18% of all journalists, domestic or foreign, accredited to the Press Gallery.

The FPC shows much more dramatic decline in the number of foreign journalists in Washington. In 2015, 1,100 foreign correspondents were credentialed with the FPC in Washington, more than three times the number credentialed by the Senate Press Gallery. Their roster contains a broader array of foreign journalists than is included in the Press Gallery, including short-term visitors and those covering issues and institutions well beyond Congress. That is down by about a quarter (26%) from the 1,490 who were credentialed in the fall of 2008. It is not entirely clear what this steeper decline is tied to, though

Foreign journalists covering Washington

% of total news staff accredited to Senate Press Gallery

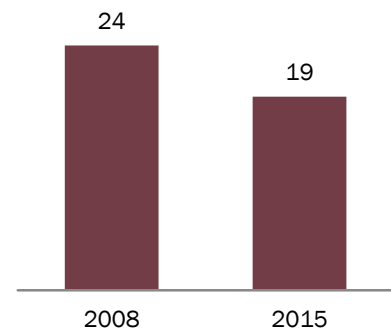


Source: U.S. Senate Press Gallery, 113th Congress (February 2014)

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Foreign magazines in D.C. dip slightly

of foreign magazines and periodicals with a bureau in D.C.



Source: Hudson’s Washington News Media Contacts Directory, 2008, 2015.

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changes in the news cycle, reporting tours and special programs for foreign journalists tied to the FPC may be factors.

Finally, yet another source – Hudson’s Washington News Media Contacts Directory – paints a similar picture when it comes to foreign magazines and other kinds of periodicals. In 2008, Hudson’s counted 24 such organizations that operated a bureau in Washington. By 2015, the number had inched downward to 19.

Altogether, the data suggest that the foreign media presence in Washington has decreased in recent years, but at least at the Congressional level, the decline has been minimal.

6. Broadcast news outlets

Getting a sense of how the presence of television and radio organizations in Washington has changed in recent years requires turning to a different data source than the Senate Press Gallery, which supports the bulk of the analysis above.

Television and radio organizations are instead accredited in the Radio and Television Gallery, which as of 2014 accredited more than 3,500 news personnel. While that is a much larger number than in the Press Gallery or other galleries, its makeup is also somewhat different in that it includes not just reporters but also producers and videographers. Still, the data offer a sense of how the Washington footprint of broadcast and cable news operations has shifted.

Collectively, national television news operations have pulled back somewhat in terms of total number of Washington staff, according to the data. In 2014, the combined accredited staff for CNN, Fox News, CBS, ABC and NBC (which includes MSNBC) shrunk by 10% to a total of 974, now accounting for just over a quarter (27%) of the more than 3,500 journalists accredited by the Radio and Television Gallery.

Another source that tracks broadcast entities in Washington, Hudson's Washington News Media Contacts Directory, measures something different – the number of news executives, correspondents and anchors for the TV news divisions in Washington. Those numbers reinforce the sense of scale-back: Hudson's listed a total of 64 core TV news staff for these networks in 2015, a number that is down by nearly a quarter from the 84 staff listed in 2008 and half the number of staff that were listed in 1985.³

Staff working for major broadcast outlets declines

of journalists for ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN and Fox News accredited to Radio and Television Gallery

	2009	2014	% change
TV journalists	1,082	974	-10
Total Radio & TV Gallery	3,355	3,559	+6

Source: U.S. Senate Radio and Television Correspondents Gallery, 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

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Core TV news staff declines in D.C.

of news executives, correspondents and anchors for ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN and Fox News

1985	127
2000	103
2004	100
2008	84
2015	64

Source: Hudson's Washington News Media Contacts Directory, multiple editions.

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³ Some Washington based broadcast divisions have been restructuring their staff away from platform-based teams to content-based teams. The ABC News bureau in Washington was [moving in this direction](#) as recently as March 2015.

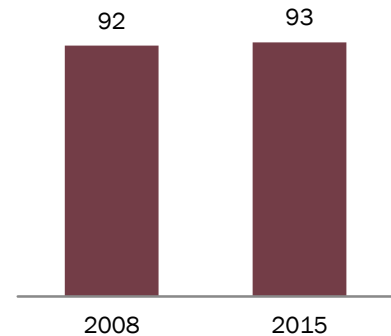
Local broadcasting with a link to Washington remained relatively stable during the period studied. But in most cases, a Washington bureau serves dozens of stations in multiple states.

Local broadcasters represented by a corporate bureau are still down from their peak in the mid-1980s, but the numbers have held steady over the past number of years. According to Hudson's, three companies with a Washington bureau provide content to a total of 93 local broadcast and cable TV stations as well as AM radio stations, about the same as the 92 stations served by four parent companies back in 2008. And at least [one company](#) has announced it is opening a new bureau. Still, the total number of stations served is down from 146 in 1985.

A few local stations support their own correspondent in Washington, according to Senate gallery data, including Alaska Public Radio and St. Louis Public Radio, whose operations merged with a digital nonprofit, St. Louis Beacon.

Number of TV and radio stations served by corporate bureau in D.C. holds steady

of stations served by a corporate bureau in D.C.



Note: Data include AM radio stations and broadcast TV stations, as well as two local cable channels.

Source: Hudson's Washington News Media Contacts Directory, 2008, 2015.

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7. Who provides coverage of the federal government to local communities

To shed light on what the cutbacks in Washington-based local newspaper correspondents mean for readers back home, a second part of this study analyzed the federal-government-oriented coverage of eight daily newspapers across the U.S. – four with a Washington correspondent and four without – on all 78 days in which Congress was in session from Feb. 1 through May 31, 2015.

One of the starkest findings is the degree to which even in communities where the local paper has a dedicated reporter in D.C., readers receive far more federal government news stories from wire services, other national media or other newsroom staff than from those reporters stationed in D.C. Much of this may be tied to the fact that one D.C. correspondent, no matter how resourceful, could never produce the amount or breadth of reporting that is provided by other sources of coverage that a daily newspaper has to choose from. But the effect of this equation on what a reader is presented with is significant.

Across the four papers studied that support a D.C. reporter, readers received about six times as many stories from a wire service as from their Washington correspondent. In addition, they were presented with nearly three times as many stories by a national media outlet and around twice as many by other internal newspaper staff not based in D.C. In total, just 8% of national government coverage came from D.C. staff reporters, compared with half (52%) that came from wires and roughly a fifth each from other staff (18%) and from other media outlets (22%).

In total, these papers carried 1,304 federal government stories during the four months studied, of which Congress was in session for 78 days. This amounted to an average of 16.7 stories per day, with an average of slightly more than one story per day coming from D.C. correspondents.

Wire services account for a majority of the U.S. government news coverage in local newspapers

Among newspapers that have/don't have a D.C. correspondent, % of stories that are produced by...

	Wire services	Other national media	Non-D.C. staff	D.C.-based staff	TOTAL STORIES
Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent	52%	22	18	8	1,304
Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	62%	19	20	NA	1,490

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership. Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding.

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The four papers without a D.C. reporter carried about the same amount of national government coverage overall (1,490 stories compared to 1,304), with stories from wire services largely accounting for the gap left unfilled by D.C.-based staff. About six-in-ten stories (62%) came from wires, while staff reporting and reporting from other media outlets each remained at about 20% of the total.⁴

Whether from the challenge of a single reporter working to do the job of what two or three Washington correspondents used to do, a conscious choice by editors for their D.C. correspondent to narrow in on one segment of the government, papers seeking to make wider use of the wire services to which they subscribe or something else entirely, wire services clearly play a large role in the news local newspaper readers receive about the federal government.

One important question left, then, is what difference or unique value comes from devoting newsroom resources to having a D.C. presence.

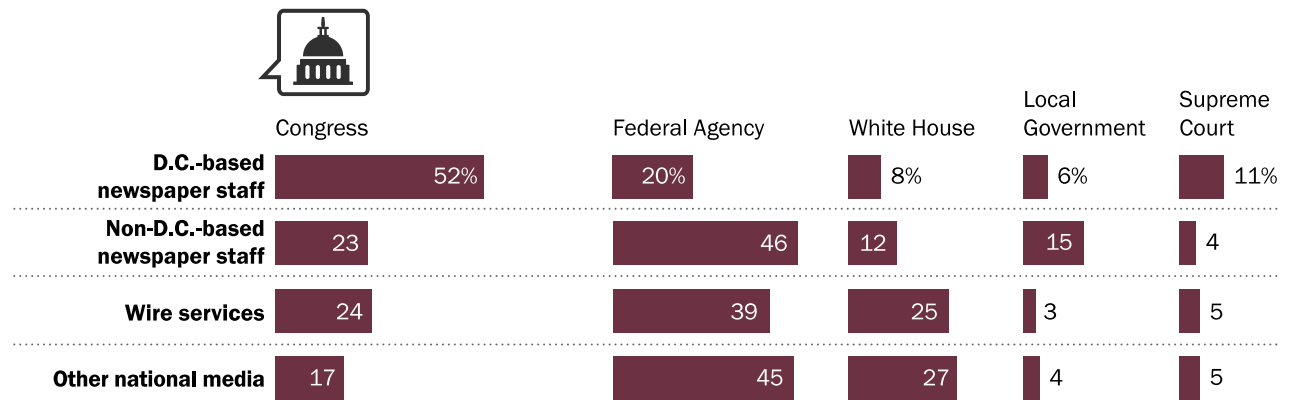
⁴ From newspaper to newspaper, there was only slight variance in the proportion of coverage coming from the various types of reporters. For three out of the four papers, coverage from D.C. staff amounted to less than 10% of all federal government news (for the fourth, it accounted for 18%). Wire services consistently accounted for the majority of national government coverage, with the exception of one paper which did not subscribe to The Associated Press. For that paper, other national media such as The New York Times accounted for the vast majority of coverage, 67%.

D.C.-based correspondents keep a close eye on Congress, less so on local impact

Even if the D.C.-based reporters account for a small slice of the national government reporting offered in their local daily newspaper, the coverage produced by D.C.-based staff reporters stands out in at least one major way: keeping close tabs on the work of Congress. The stories they produce tend to focus on Congress, often with quotes from one or more of the representatives that serve their readers' home districts and states. Nearly three quarters (71%) of all stories written by a D.C. correspondent cited a member of Congress, and 28% included quotes from members of Congress

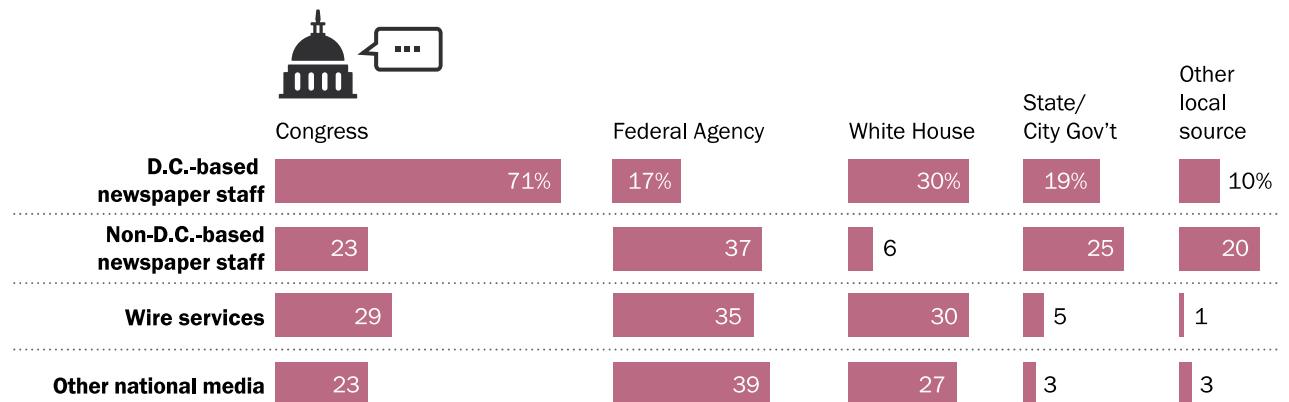
Washington-based newspaper staff mainly cover Congress . . .

% of newspaper stories produced by each group whose primary focus is...



. . . and usually cite congressional sources

% of newspaper stories produced by each group that cite ___ at least once



Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership.

Note: Not all categories shown; figures may not add up to 100%.

on both sides of the political aisle.

Correspondents who were interviewed for this project clearly sensed a need for a high level of attention given to these lawmakers. Former Cox D.C. bureau chief and Washington Post ombudsman Andy Alexander described members of Congress as “the gateway to all these incredible decisions that are made in the bureaucracy that affect local communities.”

But following them takes effort. “A lot of these guys are getting a free pass here,” said Matt Laslo, a D.C. correspondent for public radio affiliates among other outlets since 2006. “And some of them just never do interviews,” opting instead to bypass journalists and communicate their messages directly with constituents.

The payoff for this kind of laser-focused attention by a correspondent has unique benefits for readers, said Todd Gillman, The Dallas Morning News D.C. bureau chief, who argues that without a correspondent in Washington, there is a great deal a reader would never know about a lawmaker’s “foibles” or what they might have said elsewhere, at another time, such as on the campaign trail. Not to mention the art of connecting dots over time with follow-up reporting: “Nobody else does that,” says Gillman.

This direct connection to members of Congress occurred far less frequently in stories produced by other staff. Just a quarter (23%) cited a member of Congress and only 4% offered the views of representatives from different political parties. Stories from wires, whose reporters are also often in D.C., were more equally divided across White House, congressional and other federal agency sources.

These D.C.-based reporters were also more likely than others to write about events having to do with Congress. Roughly half, 52%, of their coverage focused mostly on Congress. For example, one such reporter has, in addition to his regular coverage, a column called “D.C. Notes,” which usually summarizes several subjects being discussed in Congress. Just two-in-ten of stories by D.C.-based reporters, on the other hand, were about a federal agency such as the Department of Homeland Security or the State Department and about one-in-ten (8%) focused on the White House.

Federal agencies were a much larger portion of the coverage coming from the other three types of reporters – non-D.C. based staff (46%), wires (39%) and other national media outlets (45%). Wires and other national media outlets were also more likely to produce stories about the Obama administration (25% and 27% respectively) while staff reporters back home produced more stories about local governments’ response to federal activities (15% of all stories). An Associated Press story carried on the front page of one paper studied, for example, reported on the National

Security Agency’s program to collect Americans’ phone records. Another AP story, carried the same day further inside the paper, discussed the Obama administration’s concerns about potentially reviving a rebel alliance in Syria.

The heavy focus on Congress often carries through to an inside-Washington lens

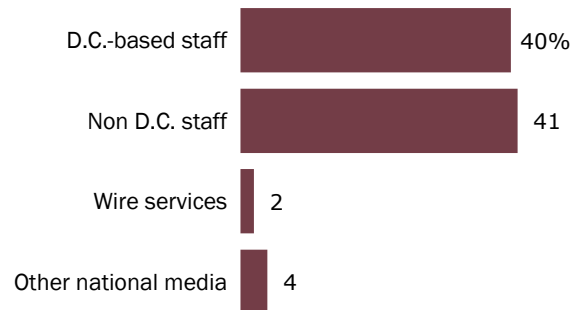
Another way of considering how the coverage from D.C.-based reporters might stand apart from other coverage about the U.S. government is by examining the approach taken by the reporter. Here, the data suggest that D.C.-based reporters, as they closely track the ins and outs of Congress, tend to present the news in a way that’s more likely to stay focused inward on Washington, rather than connecting the dots to the local communities that are served by the paper.

This comes through in two different ways. First, D.C.-based reporters are less likely than staff reporters back home to present their stories in a way that focuses mainly on how the news events might impact citizens. About a third (34%) of their coverage chiefly considered the news in terms of how it was likely to impact citizens, such as an article on how policy changes at the Department of Veterans Affairs would help veterans in a specific state. Instead, much of the coverage (40%) focuses on the impact to government and politicians – such as an article about elected leaders’ opposing views on a national piece of legislation, which focused mainly on how the stance could impact the electoral futures of these leaders. –Another 13% focused on the impact on U.S. relations with other countries.

A number of reporters interviewed for this study spoke freely of the tendency to get drawn into an inside Washington mentality or to “get sucked into that bubble” as Laslo described it. MinnPost D.C. correspondent Sam Brodey described the tension of coexisting in two worlds: Washington Beltway culture and the community a thousand miles away whose readers he serves: “There are things that I’ll think are important that sometimes my editor has to check me and be like, ‘Man, nobody in Minnesota cares about that.’”

D.C. and non-D.C. correspondents on par in discussing significance of news to local community

% of newspaper stories produced by ...



Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership.

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Among non-D.C.-based staff reporters, on the other hand, the greatest portion of stories, four-in-ten, focused mostly on the impact to citizens, while 27% mostly addressed the impact on government institutions. About another quarter (24%) focused on the impact to interest groups, such as the tech industry or telecom businesses.

Stories from wire services and other national media were more evenly divided between addressing the impact on the government, citizens and U.S. relations with other countries. Researchers also measured whether a story mentioned in some way the significance of the news to the local area, whether aimed at community members, businesses or local government. Here, D.C.-based reporters were on par with their fellow staff based at home or somewhere other than Washington. Four-in-ten stories by D.C. correspondents (40%) mentioned in some way the significance of the news to the local area, as did 41% of stories from staff not stationed in D.C. One story about tax refund fraud, for example, mainly discussed how the IRS handles identity theft, but it also included a quote from the area's U.S. Senator about how local residents might react to the news about the fraud and how they might be affected.

Both types of staff reporting are naturally more likely to mention the significance to the home area than wires and national media whose coverage is not designed for a local geographic audience.

D.C. correspondents focus most on the impact to government or politicians; non-D.C. staff on the impact to citizens

% of newspaper stories that focus on the primary impact to...

	D.C.-based staff	Non D.C. staff	Wire services	Other national media
	%	%	%	%
Government /Politicians	45	27	36	36
Citizens	34	40	23	26
Other countries	13	7	22	25
Interest Groups	8	24	15	8
Non-U.S. citizens	1	1	3	4
Other	0	1	1	1

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership. Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding.

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Across all reporter types, very little enterprise reporting

In the coverage studied, one similar characteristic across all four types of reporting groups is that the government, to a very large degree, is setting the news agenda. Whether written by D.C.-based staff of local newspapers, newspaper staff not in D.C., wire service reporters or those from other national media outlets, roughly eight-in-ten stories are triggered by something someone in the government said or did that journalists are then responding to such as a public statement or vote that occurred. In contrast, no more than one-in-eight stories came from a newsroom initiative to uncover or dig into a potential story. The national media stories that appear in these papers are somewhat more likely to be enterprise pieces (12%), but even so about three quarters (77%) are driven by the government.

While reporting on daily government activity is an important part of keeping readers back home up to date, enterprise reporting often takes the time to uncover a story that would otherwise go unnoticed and could as a result trigger follow up activity.

A couple of examples of enterprise reporting during the four months studied included a front-page special report by a local reporter on hasty inspections and repairs following a military plane crash near a local airbase and a front-page piece by a national media outlet on how some U.S. spending in Iraq and Afghanistan has wound up financing the militants.

Governmental action drives the majority of stories

% of newspaper stories triggered by...

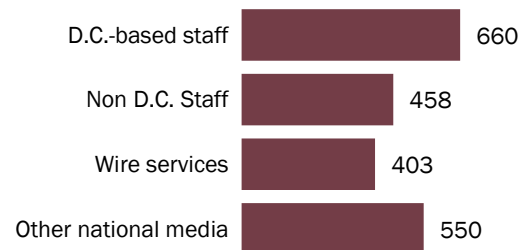
	D.C.-based staff	Non D.C. staff	Wire services	Other national media
	%	%	%	%
Government	84	84	82	77
Newsroom initiative	9	7	6	12
Outside observer	7	5	4	4
Unelected political figures/parties	1	<1	1	1
Business	0	3	2	1
Foreign Government	0	1	6	5

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership. Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding.

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D.C.-based staff stories are longer

Average length, in words, of newspaper stories written by...



Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership.

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The D.C. staff-produced stories do tend to be longer than others, running for an average of 660 words compared with 550 for national media stories, 458 for other staff stories and 403 for wire stories. That may give room for somewhat more depth in the reporting or additional voices, but the data suggests the storyline itself remains largely driven by the events of the day.

For some, this relatively low level of enterprise reporting is a shift from an earlier era of the press corps. One veteran correspondent, Miranda Spivack, described working for the Hartford Courant in an earlier era, when the paper once had four reporters staffing a Washington bureau. The reporting team would divide and conquer: “There was a point when I was there where I was [covering] Defense and also legal issues, [the] Supreme Court.” For Spivack, covering Defense meant examining defense spending in the legislation, which might have been written in by Sens. Chris Dodd or Joe Lieberman, and figuring out who or what in Connecticut would reap the benefits or suffer the consequences of spending decisions.

8. How it all adds up for the reader

It is one thing to break apart the various kinds of national government reporting and compare them against each other. But ultimately, what is the mix of coverage that a typical reader is getting when all of that reporting is considered in sum? As noted above, in the four local papers with a D.C.-based correspondent, the stories produced by those reporters accounted for just 8% of the total coverage. This suggests that even if the substance or style of their reporting *were* inherently different, that alone would not lead to a marked difference in the overall style and substance of the news these readers receive. Yet there are ways in which the federal government coverage in the four papers with a reporter based in D.C. looked different than in the four without, differences that go beyond just that 8% of stories from D.C. reporters.

D.C. correspondent given prominence

Newspapers with their own D.C. correspondent are likely to showcase that reporter's work. The stories from D.C.-based reporters are far more likely than other national government coverage to appear on the front page of the paper. A third (33%) of the coverage from these reporters appeared on the front page. That would amount to about nine stories per paper over the time period studied, about twice as common as coverage from non-D.C. staff (17%), three times as likely as coverage produced by an outside national media outlet like the Washington Post and 10 times as likely as wire copy.

A third of D.C.-based staff's stories appear on front page

% of newspaper stories by ... placed on front pages of paper

	Papers with a D.C. correspondent	Papers without a D.C. correspondent
	%	%
All types of reporters	9%	14%
D.C.-based staff	33	N/A
Non D.C. staff	17	22
Wire services	3	10
Other national media	11	17

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership.

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Another way of looking at it is to consider the mix of front-page national government coverage across these four months. Here, the greater number of stories from other types of reporters comes through, though coverage from D.C. reporters still weigh heavier than their portion of total coverage. Stories from D.C.-based staff accounted for 28% all front-page stories, which is similar

to those from non-D.C. based staff (33%) and national media (26%), while wires accounted for less, 14%.

In papers without a D.C.-based reporter, wires accounted for nearly half, 45%, of all front page stories, while non-D.C. based staff account for 32% and other national media account for 24%.

It is then in front-page coverage— the lead national government story of the day – where most of the difference lies for readers of papers with and without a staff journalist representing them in D.C.

More weight on reporting from the nation’s capital

In that same vein, readers served by newspapers with a correspondent in D.C. get more reporting in total from the nation’s capital.

A clear majority (57%) of national government stories appearing in papers with a D.C.-based reporter originate from D.C. That compares to 45% of stories in papers without someone stationed there.

This is not solely due to the D.C. correspondents. In those papers, 21% of the stories written by staff members *not* based in Washington still have a D.C. dateline. That is almost twice as much as the 12% of staff-written stories in the papers without a D.C. presence. The difference suggests that a paper supporting a Washington correspondent might be more likely to send other staff to the capital as well to report on a particular story. What’s more, even wire and national media stories that run in these papers are more likely to have been reported in D.C.: 64% of wire stories and 59% of stories from other national media outlets in papers with a D.C. correspondent, compared with 55% and 47% in newspapers without one.

Papers with a D.C.-based correspondent offer no more focus on the local area than papers without

But one result of having a greater presence in D.C. seems to be a greater emphasis on what the news means for federal institutions rather than citizens.

Papers with a D.C.-based correspondent offer readers more stories focused on the impact to the government or individual politicians than papers without a D.C. correspondent (39% vs. 30%) and are somewhat less likely to focus on the impact to citizens (25% vs. 29%).

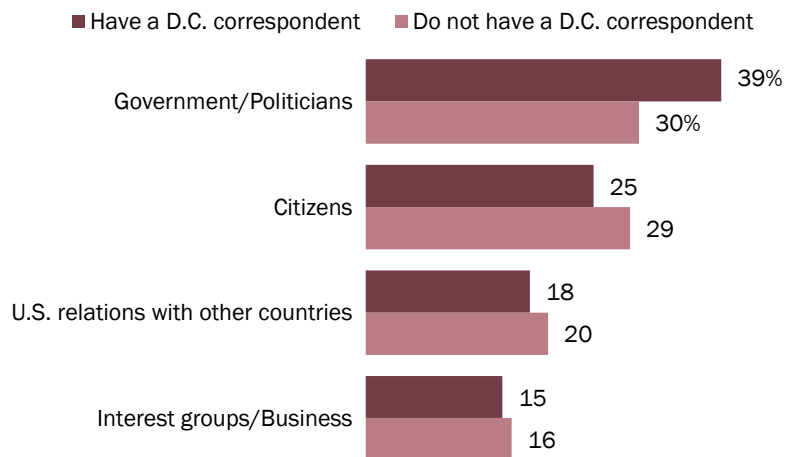
The level of *local* orientation – speaking to the significance of a story to the local community – is equal across the two groups of papers: 11% of stories presented to readers connect the significance of the news event to the local community.

There may well be other aspects not studied here that come through in papers devoted to having an invested presence in D.C. And it was clear in our conversations with several D.C. correspondents that they place a high value in being present in the capital on a day-to-day basis, of the serendipity and intimacy of being in town, even if their interactions with others are increasingly mediated by digital communication technologies.

“I think you get to know these lawmakers much better when you’re here every day,” said Deirdre Shesgreen, a regional reporter for Gannett who covers parts of the Midwest. “I’m on the Hill, and I

Newspapers with D.C. correspondents more likely to focus on how the news impact the government

% of newspaper stories that focus mainly on how the news impacts ...



Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership.

Note: Other categories not shown.

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see these lawmakers on a day-in, day-out basis, and I talk to them on a day-in, day-out basis. And I know what they are like and I know what they are up to.”

Mike Coleman, D.C. correspondent for the Albuquerque Journal, argues that being in Washington results in a “less canned” style of reporting. “I think you establish better relationships with the people you cover here. You can get them on the phone, and if you can’t get them on the phone, you can show up and just ask them what you need to ask them,” said Coleman.

The presence of reporters in the halls of Congress might put lawmakers and their staff on the defensive. But according to Marla Romash, former press secretary for Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) and Vice President Al Gore, there are benefits for both sides. “It was very important to me to be face-to-face with a reporter or a journalist and be able to talk to them in a way that allowed me to really understand how they were receiving the information that I was providing.”

And some lawmakers are out there in plain sight, just waiting for someone to pay attention to them. The Texas Tribune’s D.C. correspondent Abby Livingston described a scene in the House Gallery where reporters flocked to a handful of celebrity House members. Meanwhile, the rest “just walk by and no one ever asks them anything.” In Livingston’s view, reporters are, yes, a necessary organ through which officials communicate with their constituents, but journalists need to hold them accountable by getting in the way. When hundreds of legislators are “walking around as anonymous people at the Capitol,” said Livingston, “that’s sort of frightening.”

At the same time, there was, from many, a recognition of the challenge justifying the funds for a D.C.-based reporter when budgets are so tight and only getting tighter. “If your financial condition as a metro paper is so dire that you can’t afford a local city hall reporter it’s pretty hard to justify a Washington correspondent,” remarked Alexander, former Cox D.C. bureau chief and Washington Post ombudsman. And Shesgreen may have summed it up for many when she spoke of the possibility of the Washington bureau being cut saying, “Especially for regional reporters, that’s the perennial fear.”

9. The role of wire services

Much of this study has focused on the efforts of D.C. correspondents in covering the federal government for local communities situated outside of Washington. But, with the vast amount of news coming out of Washington day in and day out, it is wire services that supply the majority of this news to local newspaper readers, even if the paper has a reporter stationed in the nation's capital.

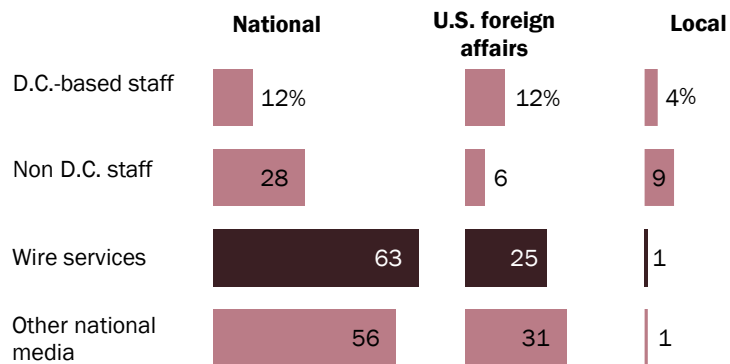
The eight newspapers in this study offered their readers 1,595 stories from wire services – nearly six-in-ten of all stories about national government produced over this four-month period. While in many cases the same stories – or close versions of them – were carried in multiple newspapers, for any individual reader this amounts to more than half of the national government coverage they receive: 52% for readers of papers with a D.C.-based correspondent and 62% for readers of papers without.

The majority, though not all, of the wire content comes from The Associated Press – an organization which, according to the most recent data from the Senate Press Gallery, accounted for 121 of the 1,782 reporters accredited to cover Congress.

It is important to note that the data here represent what newspaper editors chose to carry in the papers, not all that the reporters for the wire services produced. In making those choices, editors seem to see a clear role for the wires – one distinct in many ways from what is provided by staff reporters either in D.C. or out. The stories are more national and international in scope, are tied more to coverage of the administration and federal agencies than of Congress, and include more focus on how the news will impact other countries than do staff-produced articles. What they do less of, as could be expected, is connect back to the local communities that these papers serve.

Majority of wire coverage is national in scope

% of newspaper stories that have a ... geographic focus



Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership.

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The wire stories that appeared in these eight papers focused on a range of government areas, including Congress, federal agencies and the White House. But they focused more heavily on federal agencies and the White House than on Congress, leaving the bulk of congressional reporting to the paper's own staff. About four-in-ten wire stories (39%) covered federal agencies, while another quarter each was devoted to the Obama administration (25%) and to Congress (24%). By contrast, just 20% of D.C.

correspondents' stories related to activity tied to federal agencies and 8% to the Obama administration, while about half (52%) were tied to Congress. (Other national media, like the wire copy, tended to focus on federal agencies and the White House.)

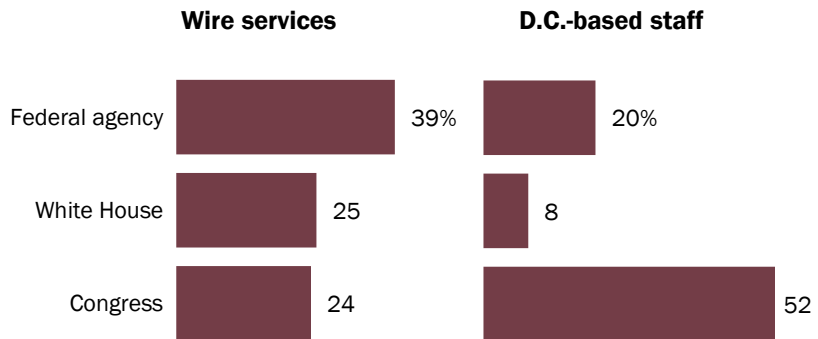
Coverage from wire services also stands out from that of D.C. and non-D.C. staff when it comes to whom or what is primarily impacted by national government events. Overall, wire coverage was generally more evenly distributed, falling in between the amount of coverage by both Washington-based and non-Washington based reporters in both of these cases. The one area of impact it was more likely to focus on was that of other countries and it was least likely to focus on how events in Washington would impact citizens: About a quarter of wire stories were dedicated to each.

Along those lines, just 2% of wire stories made any reference to the impact upon the local community (and when they did, it was mostly because they had quoted an elected leader from the area), compared with 40% of stories by staff reporters, both in and out of D.C.

Overall, the data suggest that, while the job of tying stories back to local readership is almost solely done by staff reporters, wire coverage, while heavily national in scope, tended to be less focused on one area of government or one way of presenting government developments than the coverage by other kinds of reporters. This may add some broader insight into how newspapers are dedicating

Wire coverage tied less to Congress, more to federal agencies

% of newspaper stories produced by each group that cover each area of government



Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015. News coverage of the federal government was studied in eight newspapers: four that had a correspondent based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected to reflect a mix of circulation size, geographic location and ownership.

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the limited staff resources they have. In a time when resources for newspapers [continue to be tight](#) and newspapers' reporting presence in Washington continues to diminish, the decisions around wire coverage play a large role in the nature of the national government reporting readers receive.

Acknowledgments

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This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals.

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Methodology

This analysis builds from [a study](#) produced by Pew Research Center in 2009, which examined the makeup of the Washington press corps from 1985 through 2009, chronicling the rise of niche and foreign press, as well as the decline of legacy media in Washington over the course of several decades. This study examines the changes in that makeup since 2009 and adds a study of coverage in newspapers with and without a D.C.-based correspondent.

The report draws upon several distinct methodologies and data sets.

The **accounting of the journalists and news organizations** with a presence in Washington draws upon multiple data sources, primarily, the four Senate galleries, which accredit news staff from print, broadcast, digital, news agency and other kinds of organizations to cover Congress. In addition, researchers studied and tabulated the listings compiled by Hudson's Washington News Media Contacts Directory, and reported numbers supplied by the Regional Reporters Association and the U.S. State Department Foreign Press Center in Washington.

The **content analysis of national government coverage** in local newspapers collected and analyzed material from eight different local daily newspapers, each differing by region, state, ownership, and stratified by circulation tier. Four of the papers were staffed by a D.C.-based reporter, while the other four were not. The study included stories published between Feb. 1 and May 31, 2015, omitting weeks in which Congress was not in session. A total of 624 newspaper editions were studied for a total of 2,794 stories.

In addition, **direct interviews** with current and former members of the Washington press corps were conducted, as well as with individual staff who work for the institutions that provided data. A total of 21 interviews were conducted in person and on the phone.

Database and directory secondary analysis

There is no single definitive, comprehensive database that lists every news organization and every journalist based in Washington, D.C. However, there are sources – mainly directories, accreditation lists and membership lists – available that do list a significant percentage of those journalists and news organizations based in the nation's capital. This report draws chiefly upon two sources: The Senate galleries and Hudson's.

Each reflects a different collection of data about news organizations. Like most organizational directories, the accuracy for any one year is subject to omission, human error and/or inaccurate or

incomplete reporting on the part of the news organizations themselves. But each source, over time, provides trends about those particular measures.

Senate Galleries

The four Senate galleries publish lists of the organizations and individuals accredited to cover Congress (the lists are compiled and published for every Congress in the Congressional Directory and have been since 1888). The four galleries – entitled Press, Periodical, Radio and Television, and Photographers – are generally updated and published every two years.

This report draws primarily upon information found in the Press Gallery (the most recent edition was published in February 2014), and continues trends established in Pew Research Center's [2009 report](#). The Press Gallery is of particular interest due to the fact that it houses the main share of journalists and publishers that serve a local audience (daily newspapers), and also because it is where much of the change has occurred in recent years as new entrants, such as digital news startups, begin to replace some legacy news producers in the ranks.

Some limited information was also included from the other Senate galleries, though not all galleries operate according to the same accreditation rules; the Photographers Gallery does not have a Washington-area residency requirement. And the makeup of the galleries may differ one to the next: The Radio and Television Gallery is quite large in size, but includes technical staff such as producers and videographers, rather than just reporters.

News organizations sometimes accredit every member of their Washington staff, including support staff. Thus the number of congressional accreditations for a news organization sometimes exceeds the number of journalists it employs and the number of actual reporters on the beat for any one year. Still, the changes year to year reveal accreditation patterns over time and provide one way to identify and track these trends.

Analysis of the gallery data was conducted as follows:

To tabulate the total number of journalists accredited to each of the four galleries, researchers downloaded the lists found on the Congressional Directory page of the U.S. Government Publishing Office website. The lists were converted into CSV files, with a second researcher checking every 50th entry to ensure the data were transferred correctly. The totals were then summed, with the individual journalist name used as the unit of measurement.

Each Senate gallery lists journalists' names and affiliated news organizations. For the Senate Press Gallery analysis researchers took further steps to classify every journalist listed into the types of news outlets represented. Five categories were used – three that matched the categories used in the 2009 report, and two new categories.

The three from 2009 were: **U.S. mainstream wire services** (The Associated Press and Reuters); **U.S. mainstream daily newspapers** (individual papers such as The New York Times and corporate owners such as Gannett); and **U.S. niche outlets** (such as Roll Call).

The two new categories were as follows:

Broad-interest digital news outlets (domestic outlets such as The Huffington Post), which began establishing a presence in Washington in recent years. Researchers also identified journalists working for a niche outlet that was a digital-native publication. (An outlet is considered “digital-native” if it was launched on the web, and the internet is its primary distribution platform.) This allowed us to calculate the total number of digital-native journalists whether with broad interest or niche outlets.

Foreign Journalists: The number of foreign journalists was drawn from the Press Gallery list as well. The 2009 Pew Research Center report drew primarily upon the Foreign Press Centers for data on the number of foreign correspondents in Washington. While this report utilizes data from that source as well, the primary source used is the Senate Press Gallery – which allowed us to more easily compare the number of foreign journalists in Washington to the number of journalists from other kinds of organizations, such as daily newspapers. These two agencies credential journalists using different criteria, but both help give a sense of the trends. (Following the method used in 2009, news organizations focusing on a niche subject such as energy or finance, yet also had multiple headquarters around the world including in Washington, were categorized as domestic.)

Every name and outlet in the Press Gallery list was categorized by a research staff member, and each entry was reviewed by a senior staff member. Each outlet was researched individually to determine its appropriate category. When disagreements arose among staff members or when an outlet's origin or status was unclear, someone on the research staff contacted the publisher of the outlet directly via telephone or email for clarification.

For the other Senate galleries, information about the number of journalists working for a specific outlet or group of outlets was tabulated but not classified into categories in the same way that the Press Gallery was for this report.

Hudson's Washington News Media Contacts Directory

Published annually since 1968, the Hudson's directory lists news organizations with a presence in Washington by category (e.g. newspapers, radio, television, specialty or niche publications, news services, etc.) and also lists individual journalists working at each organization. The data are available both in a print edition and in an online database. In order to work with the most current information, researchers collected the information provided in the database and saved it in a CSV file for further analysis.

Data tallied from the 2015 edition was used to update several data points found in the 2009 report, which itself relied upon data from the 1985, 2000, 2004 and 2008 editions, including the number of daily newspapers with their own bureau, the number of papers served by a corporate parent's Washington bureau, the number of foreign publications with a Washington bureau, and the number of local TV stations served by the Washington bureau of a corporate parent.

Content analysis

This report also examined news media coverage of the federal government in eight newspapers from Feb. 1 to May 31, 2015, for the weeks Congress was in session. That resulted in 13 weeks of content with four weeks omitted because Congress was not in session. The four weeks omitted were as follows:

- Feb. 15-20
- March 29-April 3
- April 5-10
- May 24-29

In all, a total of 624 newspaper editions were coded over 78 days and included 2,794 stories. Newspapers were collected through e-editions that were identical to the print versions. Human coders examined the entirety of each paper to determine which stories were relevant and would be included in the study.

The study consisted of newspaper editions that were published six days a week (Sunday through Friday).

Sample design

Eight newspapers were selected for this project: four that had bureaus based in Washington, D.C., and four that did not. Papers were selected so that each group would have a similar mix of papers

according to circulation size, geographic location and ownership. Accessibility to online versions of the papers was also considered.

Both sets of newspapers had one paper from each of the following regions as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau: Northeast, South, Midwest and West. Each group also had one paper with a circulation size of over 200,000 according to recent data by the Alliance of Audited Media, two papers with circulations between 100,000 and 200,000, and one paper with a circulation less than 100,000.

The newspapers included in the study were as follows:

Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent

- Albuquerque Journal (Owned by Journal Publishing Company)
- The Buffalo News (owned by Berkshire Hathaway)
- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (owned by Journal Media Group)
- The Oklahoman (owned by OPUBCO Communications)

Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent

- The Providence Journal (Owned by New Media Investment Group)
- San Jose Mercury News (Owned by MediaNews Group)
- The Toledo Blade (Owned by Block Communications)
- The Virginian-Pilot (owned by Landmark Media Enterprises)

Content capture

For each paper, researchers examined e-editions that were exact digital copies of the print versions.

Most of the e-editions were accessed using the [PressDisplay](#) web service. The exceptions were San Jose Mercury News, The Toledo Blade and The Virginian-Pilot because each of those papers had e-edition archives available on their own websites.

To ensure all relevant articles produced by the specific D.C. correspondents were included, supplementary searches were conducted. These included keyword searches for the journalists' names in both the Lexis database, and keyword searches in the archives available on each of the newspapers' own websites.

Story selection

The unit of analysis for this study was the story.

For all the newspapers collected, researchers examined every article to determine if the story fit the criteria for inclusion in this study. News stories were included if 25% or more of the story was about national governing or policy. These included subjects such as:

- National legislation
- Executive actions taken by the White House
- Congressional affairs
- Federal agencies
- State or municipal governments if they are responding to federal laws or actions
- Supreme Court rulings
- U.S. foreign affairs (only if Congress or the U.S. federal government was involved)

Several types of stories were specifically excluded. Among those were stories about the federal government that were not about policy or legislation. This included stories about subjects such as ceremonies and state dinners. Op-eds and editorials were excluded, as were letters to the editor. Lists of votes were skipped if there was no other reporting included. Stories that were purely focused on the horse-race aspect of a political campaign were excluded as well.

Story codes

The data in this study were created by a team of four experienced coders under supervision by a senior researcher. The following variables were used:

- **Dateline:** The city or location that is listed as the dateline for the story.
- **Author's organization:** Determines which organization produced the content.
- **Sources cited:** Denotes whether a person or group is quoted, interviewed or clearly labeled as the source of factual information in a story.
- **Local mention:** Denotes if the story includes information related to the local area (city/state/region) where the newspaper is based.
- **Local impact:** Denotes if the story includes information about how the issue discussed relates to public life in the local area/state/region where the newspaper is located.
- **Geographic focus:** This variable concerns the geographic area to which the content of the story is relevant in relation to the location of the news source.
- **Area of government:** Indicates the part of government that is the subject of the story, where the option chosen was the best fit.
- **Word Count:** Designates the word count of each story.
- **Placement:** Designates where stories are located within a publication.
- **Primary impact:** Determines the group, organization or person whose circumstances will somehow be changed by the action that is the focus of the story.

- **Trigger:** Designates the action, event or editorial decision that makes this news, thus triggering its publication.

Categorization of story authorship

Throughout the report, the authorships of articles are generally classified in four categories:

- stories produced by D.C.-based correspondents
- stories produced by other staff not based in D.C.
- stories produced by any wire service (independent such as The Associated Press or wires services owned by parent media companies such as Journal Wire Reports or Blade News Services)
- stories produced by other national media outlets not directly associated with the newspaper (such as The New York Times or The Washington Post)

Some stories had a combination of authors from different organizations or classifications. In those cases, stories were classified into a single group with the following rules:

- Stories that were produced by multiple reporters with at least one of them being a staff D.C. correspondent were included in the “produced by a staff D.C. correspondent” category.
- Stories that were produced by a combination of staff members and outside organizations were included in the “produced by staff not located in D.C.” category.

Datelines for each story were recorded as listed in the paper, unless an article had no dateline listed at all. In those instances, the home city of the paper (or of the other media outlet that produced the story) was recorded as the dateline location.

Intercoder testing

Each coder trained with a senior researcher for approximately two weeks to learn the codebook.

In order to demonstrate the validity of the coding rules that were specific for this project, intercoder testing was conducted on all variables. The testing consisted of two stages. Before the coding began, each member of the coding team was given the same 40 randomly selected stories to code. Then, after the coding was completed, 102 randomly selected stories were coded by two different coders. In total, 142 stories were coded by more than one person for comparison.

The percent of agreement on each variable for the two stages combined was:

- Dateline: 92%
- Author's organization: 92%
- Sources cited (all 20 sources combined): 96%
- Local mention: 90%
- Local impact: 89%
- Geographic focus: 89%
- Area of government: 90%
- Word Count (+- 10 words): 98%
- Placement: 99%
- Primary impact: 86%
- Trigger: 89%
- Topic: 87%

In addition, coders had to determine whether stories should be included or excluded from the study according to the coding rules. Researchers tested the reliability of this process in two stages. Before coding, each member of the team was given the same 30 stories to code for inclusion or exclusion. After the coding was completed, two coders examined 25 newspaper editions (or 124 stories) to see if each story should be included or excluded. Agreement for these 154 stories was 89%.

Direct interviews

The findings in this report were reinforced and provided context by a total of 21 one-on-one interviews conducted by Pew Research Center staff. Most of the sources reside or work in the Washington, D.C., area.

A total of five out of the 21 interviews were conducted in person and generally lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. The remainder were conducted by phone and generally lasted between 10 and 45 minutes.

Interview subjects included current and former Washington-based reporters and editors working for print, broadcast and online publications in the capital. Also interviewed were staff members of the Press, Radio and Television, Periodical and Press Photographers galleries, as well as a former Senate staffer, and heads of nonprofit and for-profit organizations that track and list Washington-based journalists.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and organized according to themes that emerged in the text.

Today's Washington Press Corps More Digital, Specialized

Topline – Database and Directories

December 2015

Pew Research Center

Full Congressional Directory

Number of journalists and percent of total

	2009		2014		Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
U.S. Senate Press Gallery	1,658	25	1,782	26	124	7
U.S. Senate Periodicals Gallery	1,282	20	1,221	18	-61	-5
U.S. Senate Radio & TV Gallery	3,355	51	3,559	52	204	6
U.S. Senate Photographers Gallery	249	4	254	4	5	2
Total	6,544	100	6,816	100	272	4

Source: Congressional Directory. 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

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U.S. Senate Press Gallery Categories

Number of journalists and percent of total

	2009		2014		Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Daily newspaper	608	37	576	32	-32	-5
Niche outlet	500	30	589	33	89	18
Mainstream newswires	214	13	216	12	2	1
Foreign outlet	334	20	328	18	-6	-2
Broad-interest websites	2	0	73	4	71	3,550
Total	1,658	100	1,782	100	124	7

Source: Congressional Directory. 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

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Digital-native outlet staff accredited to cover Congress

Number of journalists and percent of total

	2009		2014		Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Broad-interest websites	2	6	73	55	71	3,550
Niche (digital-native)	29	94	60	45	31	107
All digital	31	100	133	100	102	329

Source: Congressional Directory. 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

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Niche outlets staff accredited to cover Congress

Number of journalists and percent of total

	2009		2014		Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Niche (legacy)	471	94	529	90	58	12
Niche (digital-native)	29	6	60	10	31	107
All niche	500	100	589	100	89	18

Source: Congressional Directory. 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

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Regional reporters

Number of Regional Reporters Association members and change over time

	2008		2015		Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Members	73		59		-14	-19

Source: Regional Reporters Association

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Foreign magazines in DC

Number of foreign magazines and periodicals with a bureau in DC and change over time

	2008		2015		Change	
	#		#		#	%
Magazines and periodicals	24		19		-5	-21

Source: Hudson's Washington News Media Contacts Directory, 2008, 2015.

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Newspaper journalists accredited to Press Gallery, by paper type

Number of journalists and percent of total

	2009		2014		Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Corporate bureau	81	13	80	14	-1	-1
Daily national paper	131	22	170	30	39	30
Daily national paper with local coverage	263	43	204	35	-59	-22
Local daily paper	126	21	112	19	-14	-11
Freelance/syndicate	7	1	10	2	3	43
Total newspaper	608	100	576	100	-32	-5

Source: Congressional Directory. 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

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Newspaper staff & states covered by their publications in Press Gallery

Number of journalists

	2009	2014	Change	
	#	#	#	%
Local daily paper	125	111	-14	-11
<i>States covered</i>	33	29	-4	-12
Daily national paper with local coverage	263	204	-59	-22
<i>States covered</i>	2	2	0	0

Source: Congressional Directory. 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

Note: For this table, one reporter covering Puerto Rico's Nuevo Dia was excluded from analysis of both 2009 and 2014.

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Local newspapers & states (Press Gallery)

Number of journalists and change over time

	2009		2014		Change	
	#	# lost	#	# added	#	%
Local newspapers	61	19	49	8	-12	-20
States covered (unique # of states covered by newspapers in each list – e.g., unique states covered by 16 newspapers lost in 2009)	33	16	29	7	-4	-12

Source: Congressional Directory. 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

Note: Includes local daily papers as well as national papers that also cover local issues.

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Newspaper bureaus

Number of individual bureaus and papers served by corporate bureau

	2008		2015		Change	
	#		#		#	
Newspaper bureaus	39		27		-12	
States covered	27		20		-7	
Newspapers served by corporate bureau	262		198		-64	

Source: Hudson's Washington News Media Contacts Directory, 2008, 2015.

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Core TV news staff in D.C.

Year and number of news executives, correspondents and anchors for ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox News

	#	# Change from previous year
1985	127	n/a
2000	103	-24
2004	100	-3
2008	84	-16
2015	64	-20

Source: Hudson's Washington News Media Contacts Directory, multiple editions.

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Major broadcasters in Press Gallery

Number and percent of total

	2009		2014		Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total (ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN and Fox News)	1,082	32	974	27	-108	-10
Total Radio TV Gallery	3,355	100	3,559	100	204	6

Source: Congressional Directory. 113th Congress (February 2014), 111th Congress (December 2009).

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TV stations served by corporate bureau*Number and change*

	2008	2015	Change	
	#	#	#	%
Stations	92	93	1	1

Source: Hudson's News Media Contacts Directory, 2008, 2015.

Note: Data include AM radio stations and broadcast TV stations, as well as two local cable channels.

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A historical view: Washington press corps in the mid-1980s

of...

Sector	# outlets	# staff	# states	Year	Source
Newspapers with their own bureaus in D.C.*	71	n/a	35	1985	Hudson's
Newsletters with D.C. bureaus or staff	138	n/a	n/a	1986	Capital Source
Trade publications and magazines with D.C. bureaus or staff	172	n/a	n/a	1986	Capital Source
Daily newspaper staff accredited to the Senate Press Gallery	n/a	734	n/a	1985-1986	Senate Press Gallery
Wire services staff accredited to the Senate Press Gallery	n/a	201	n/a	1985-1986	Senate Press Gallery
Local TV and radio stations with access to feeds from corporate news bureaus	146	n/a	42	1985	Hudson's
Core TV news staff in D.C.**	n/a	127	n/a	1985	Hudson's

Source: Hudson's Washington News Media Contacts Directory, 1985; The Capital Source Directories, 1986; Congressional Directory, 99th Congress (1985-1986).

* The Pew Research Center's 2015 report on the Washington press corps uses a slightly broader metric than was used for the 1985 data shown here in order to tabulate the number of newspapers with their own bureau for the years 2008 and 2015. The broader trend of decline in newspaper bureaus still holds over this 30-year time period.

** These numbers were also reported above in the table titled "Core TV news staff in D.C."

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Today's Washington Press Corps More Digital, Specialized**Content Analysis Topline – All Papers Combined****December 2015****Pew Research Center**

Number of Stories Per Paper

Albuquerque Journal	332
The Buffalo News	336
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel	383
The Oklahoman	253
The Providence Journal	336
San Jose Mercury News	410
The Toledo Blade	341
The Virginian-Pilot	403
Total	2,794

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

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Story Placement

Number and percent of stories on the front page/not on the front page, by staff type

	All Papers Combined									
	Includes D.C. correspondent (registered)		Includes other staff (but no DC staff)		Wire (any owner)		Other national media outlet (non-wire)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Front page	34	33	105	20	108	7	80	14	327	12
Other	70	67	423	80	1,487	93	487	86	2,467	88
Total	104	100	528	100	1,595	100	567	100	2,794	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

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Story Dateline

Number and percent of stories with each dateline, by staff type

	All Papers Combined									
	Includes D.C. correspondent (registered)		Includes other staff (but no DC staff)		Wire (any owner)		Other national media outlet (non-wire)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Home city	12	12	338	64	194	12	78	14	622	22
Washington, D.C.	92	88	85	16	939	59	302	53	1,418	51
New York City	0	0	3	1	40	3	27	5	70	3
All other U.S. cities	0	0	83	16	261	16	87	15	431	15
Outside of U.S.	0	0	19	4	161	10	73	13	253	9
Total	104	100	528	100	1,595	100	567	100	2,794	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

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Geographic Focus

Number and percent of stories with each geographic focus, by staff type

	All Papers Combined									
	Includes D.C. correspondent (registered)		Includes other staff (but no DC staff)		Wire (any owner)		Other national media outlet (non-wire)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Entirely national (90%+)	12	12	147	28	1,012	63	320	56	1,491	53
Entirely local or regional (90%+)	4	4	50	9	14	1	8	1	76	3
Entirely about another region of the country outside of the paper's home area	0	0	5	1	101	6	27	5	133	5
Entirely about U.S. foreign affairs	12	12	34	6	404	25	177	31	627	22
Non-U.S. International	0	0	2	<1	9	1	1	<1	12	<1
Combination local/regional/national	76	73	290	55	55	3	34	6	455	16
Total	104	100	528	100	1,595	100	567	100	2,794	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

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Big Stories (Top 9)

Number and percent of stories addressing each big story, by staff type

	All Papers Combined									
	Includes D.C. correspondent (registered)		Includes other staff (but no DC staff)		Wire (any owner)		Other national media outlet (non-wire)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Same-sex marriage court cases/laws	3	3	7	1	39	2	13	2	62	2
Obamacare/Medicare – Medicaid/health care legislation	8	8	41	8	66	4	32	6	147	5
Tax laws/IRS	2	2	7	1	35	2	4	1	48	2
Ferguson/Police/Racial tensions	1	1	6	1	27	2	16	3	50	2
TPP Legislation/trade	4	4	7	1	30	2	9	2	50	2
Budget/deficits (includes government shutdown)	9	9	10	2	98	6	15	3	132	5
Combating ISIS/Islamic St/international terrorism	3	3	17	3	109	7	56	10	185	7
H. Clinton scandals (Benghazi and emails)	0	0	3	1	38	2	10	2	51	2
Iran deal and U.S./Israel relations combined	8	8	23	4	152	10	43	8	226	8

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Topics Covered

Number and percent of stories addressing each topic, by staff type

	All Papers Combined									
	Includes D.C. correspondent (registered)		Includes other staff (but no DC staff)		Wire (any owner)		Other national media outlet (non-wire)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Government	19	18	75	14	284	18	87	15	465	17
Campaign/politics/elections	4	4	11	2	25	2	3	1	43	2
Defense (domestic)	8	8	35	7	62	4	18	3	123	4
Crime	1	1	39	7	61	4	15	3	116	4
Domestic terrorism	0	0	4	1	39	2	19	3	62	2
Business and economics	10	10	70	13	208	13	36	6	324	12
Environment and energy	12	12	57	11	73	5	30	5	172	6
Transportation	6	6	13	2	59	4	13	2	91	3
Education	1	1	17	3	21	1	13	2	52	2
Immigration	2	2	14	3	21	1	7	1	44	2
Other domestic affairs	6	6	40	8	49	3	23	4	118	4
Religion	2	2	4	1	12	1	0	0	18	1
Health and medicine	8	8	58	11	109	7	52	9	227	8
Science and tech	0	0	15	3	44	3	22	4	81	3
Social minority and gender issues	3	3	14	3	72	5	34	6	123	4
Disasters/accidents	1	1	13	2	30	2	5	1	49	2
U.S. foreign-affairs	21	20	49	9	426	27	190	34	686	25
Total	104	100	528	100	1,595	100	567	100	2,794	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Main Area of Government Covered

Number and percent of stories covering each area of government, by staff type

	All Papers Combined									
	Includes D.C. correspondent (registered)		Includes other staff (but no DC staff)		Wire (any owner)		Other national media outlet (non-wire)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
White House/Obama Administration	8	8	61	12	402	25	151	27	622	22
Congress	54	52	119	23	389	24	94	17	656	23
Federal Agency	21	20	241	46	625	39	256	45	1,143	41
Local government	6	6	81	15	46	3	20	4	153	5
International Government	4	4	2	<1	49	3	19	3	74	3
Supreme Court	11	11	21	4	74	5	27	5	133	5
Other	0	0	3	1	10	1	0	0	13	<1
Total	104	100	528	100	1,595	100	567	100	2,794	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Primary Impact

Number and percent of stories that primarily address the impact on each group, by staff type

	All Papers Combined									
	Includes D.C. correspondent (registered)		Includes other staff (but no DC staff)		Wire (any owner)		Other national media outlet (non-wire)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Citizens	35	34	209	40	373	23	150	26	767	27
Politicians + Government	47	45	141	27	574	36	204	36	966	35
Interest groups/business	8	8	129	24	238	15	47	8	422	15
U.S. relations with other countries	13	13	36	7	350	22	139	25	538	19
Non-U.S. citizens	1	1	7	1	48	3	23	4	79	3
Other	0	0	6	1	12	1	4	1	22	1
Total	104	100	528	100	1,595	100	567	100	2,794	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Impact on the Local Community

Number and percent of stories that primarily address the impact on the local community, by staff type

	All Papers Combined									
	Includes D.C. correspondent (registered)		Includes other staff (but no DC staff)		Wire (any owner)		Other national media outlet (non-wire)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Inclusion of local impact	42	40	214	41	29	2	21	4	306	11
Total	104	100	528	100	1,595	100	567	100	2,794	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Story Trigger

Number and percent of stories that were triggered by the action of each group, by staff type

	All Papers Combined									
	Includes D.C. correspondent (registered)		Includes other staff (but no DC staff)		Wire (any owner)		Other national media outlet (non-wire)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Government	87	84	442	84	1,302	82	434	77	2,265	81
Business	0	0	15	3	28	2	6	1	49	2
Outside observer	7	7	27	5	59	4	24	4	117	4
Unelected political figures/parties	1	1	1	<1	13	1	3	1	18	1
Press driven	9	9	37	7	98	6	70	12	214	8
Foreign government	0	0	6	1	95	6	30	5	131	5
Total	104	100	528	100	1,595	100	567	100	2,794	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Sources Cited At Least Once

Number and percent of stories citing each source at least once, by staff type

	All Papers Combined									
	Includes D.C. correspondent (registered)		Includes other staff (but no DC staff)		Wire (any owner)		Other national media outlet (non-wire)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Federal Government Agency	18	17	196	37	555	35	223	39	992	36
Obama or Obama Administration	31	30	34	6	476	30	152	27	693	25
At least one member of Congress	74	71	119	23	470	29	129	23	792	28
Any city or state government source	20	19	132	25	73	5	18	3	243	9
Any other local source	10	10	108	20	15	1	16	3	149	5
No sources	7	7	100	19	326	20	111	20	544	19

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Today's Washington Press Corps More Digital, Specialized

Content Analysis Topline – By Paper Type

December 2015

Pew Research Center

Number of stories per paper

Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent		Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	
Albuquerque Journal	332	The Providence Journal	336
The Buffalo News	336	San Jose Mercury News	410
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel	383	The Toledo Blade	341
The Oklahoman	253	The Virginian-Pilot	403
Total	1,304	Total	1,490

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Story Placement

Number and percent of stories on the front page/not on the front page, by staff type and paper type

	Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent										Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent							
	Includes D.C. staff		Staff not in D.C.		Wire (any ownership group)		Other national media outlet		Total		Staff (any location)		Wire (any ownership group)		Other national media outlet		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Front page	34	33	40	17	17	3	32	11	123	9	65	22	91	10	48	17	204	14
Other	70	67	194	83	661	97	256	89	1,181	91	229	78	826	90	231	83	1,286	86
Total	104	100	234	100	678	100	288	100	1,304	100	294	100	917	100	279	100	1,490	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Story Dateline

Number and percent of stories with each dateline, by staff type and paper type

	Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent										Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent							
	Includes D.C. staff		Staff not in D.C.		Wire (any ownership group)		Other national media outlet		Total		Staff (any location)		Wire (any ownership group)		Other national media outlet		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Home city	12	12	148	63	84	12	28	10	272	21	190	65	110	12	50	18	350	23
Washington, D.C.	92	88	49	21	434	64	171	59	746	57	36	12	505	55	131	47	672	45
New York City	0	0	3	1	14	2	10	3	27	2	0	0	26	3	17	6	43	3
All other U.S. cities	0	0	29	12	86	13	46	16	161	12	54	18	175	19	41	15	270	18
Outside of U.S.	0	0	5	2	60	9	33	11	98	8	14	5	101	11	40	14	155	10
Total	104	100	234	100	678	100	288	100	1,304	100	294	100	917	100	279	100	1,490	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Geographic Focus

Number and percent of stories with each geographic focus, by paper type

	Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent		Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	
	#	%	#	%
Entirely national (90%+)	689	53	802	54
Entirely local (90%+)	31	2	45	3
Entirely about another region outside of the paper's home area	58	4	75	5
U.S. foreign affairs	269	21	358	24
Non-U.S. International	9	1	3	<1
Combination Local/Regional/National	248	19	207	14
Total	1,304	100	1,490	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Big Stories (Top 9)

Number and percent of stories addressing each big story, by paper type

	Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent		Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	
	#	%	#	%
Same-sex marriage court cases/laws	28	2	34	2
Obamacare/Medicare -Medicaid/health care legislation	77	6	70	5
Tax laws/IRS	19	1	29	2
Ferguson/Police/Racial tensions	23	2	27	2
TPP Legislation/trade	23	2	27	2
Budget/deficits (includes government shutdown)	74	6	58	4
Combating ISIS/Islamic St/international terrorism	69	5	116	8
H. Clinton scandals (Benghazi and emails)	23	2	28	2
Iran deal and U.S./Israel relations combined	109	8	117	8

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Topics Covered

Number and percent of stories addressing each topic, by paper type

	Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent		Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	
	Total		Total	
	#	%	#	%
Government (internal workings)	227	17	238	16
Campaigns/politics	21	2	22	1
Defense (domestic)	50	4	73	5
Crime	47	4	69	5
Domestic terrorism	22	2	40	3
Business and economics	154	12	170	11
Environment and energy	89	7	83	6
Transportation	43	3	48	3
Education	28	2	24	2
Immigration	24	2	20	1
Other domestic affairs	55	4	63	4
Religion	8	1	10	1
Health and medicine	114	9	113	8
Science and technology	42	3	39	3
Social minority and gender issues	53	4	70	5
Disasters/accidents	20	2	29	2
U.S. foreign affairs	307	24	379	25
Total	1,304	100	1,490	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Main Area of Government Covered

Number and percent of stories covering each area of government, by paper type

	Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent		Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	
	#	%	#	%
White House/Obama Administration	306	23	316	21
Congress	339	26	317	21
Federal Agency	487	37	656	44
Local government	68	5	85	6
International government	23	2	51	3
Supreme Court	78	6	55	4
Other	3	<1	10	1
Total	1,304	100	1,490	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Primary Impact

Number and percent of stories that primarily address the impact on each group, by paper type

	Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent		Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	
	#	%	#	%
Citizens	328	25	439	29
Politicians + Government	512	39	454	30
Interest groups/business	190	15	232	16
U.S. relations with other countries	236	18	302	20
Other	38	3	63	4
Total	1,304	100	1,490	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Impact on the Local Community

Number and percent of stories that primarily address the impact on the local community, by paper type

	Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent		Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	
	#	%	#	%
Mention local impact	149	11	157	11
Total	1,304	100	1,490	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Story Trigger

Number and percent of stories that were triggered by the action of each group, by paper type

	Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent		Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	
	#	%	#	%
Government	1,038	80	1,227	82
Business	24	2	25	2
Outside observer	68	5	49	3
Unelected political figures/parties	7	1	11	1
Press driven	121	9	93	6
Foreign government	46	4	85	6
Total	1,304	100	1,490	100

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

Numbers may not equal 100 due to rounding

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Sources Cited At Least Once

Number and percent of stories citing each source at least once, by paper type

	Newspapers with a D.C. correspondent		Newspapers without a D.C. correspondent	
	#	%	#	%
Federal Government Agency	463	36	529	36
Obama or Obama Administration	363	28	330	22
At least one member of Congress	398	31	394	26
Any city or state government source	117	9	126	8
Any other local source	76	6	73	5
No Sources	222	17	322	22

Source: Content analysis conducted on the 78 days that Congress was in session during February-May 2015.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
