

Time Warner Shareholder Meeting Question
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National Center for Public Policy Research
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I'm David Almasi of the National Center for Public Policy Research. Its chairman and I are both Time Warner shareholders.

Time Warner is under fire for sponsoring the Public Theater's violent Trump-inspired performance of the play Julius Caesar in Central Park.¹ I'd like you to explain your continued sponsorship, but let's also talk about CNN.

In the past month, CNN parted ways with Kathy Griffin over her photo with a mock severed Trump head² and Reza Aslan after he called our President a piece of excrement for pushing the anti-terror travel ban.³

Mr. Bewkes, we have urged you many times to make CNN more objective.⁴ You admitted to us in 2013 the need for more balance.⁵ We praised you last year after CNN President Jeff Zucker also acknowledged this and acted on the need for more diverse views.⁶ But bias is apparently worse than ever. As shareholders, we are concerned about the reputational risk to our investment in Time Warner as CNN appears to be a key player in the war against the Trump presidency.

CNN's Trump criticism seems obsessive. To put numbers to this obsession, the Media Research Center analyzed CNN programming between 4am and midnight on Friday, May 12. Of the 13 hours and 27 minutes of news coverage during that time, all but 68 minutes were devoted to Trump, overwhelmingly concerning his firing of FBI Director James Comey. Of the 123 guests and panelists on CNN that day, 96 were cited by MRC as being anti-Trump. Only seven were pro-Trump, and 20 were neutral or mixed. Of the 71 CNN experts, only two supported Trump. The MRC report also noted that "[t]he imbalance in guests was amplified by the frequent editorializing of CNN's own hosts and anchors."⁷

I don't think you're achieving your goal of "trying to be independent and objective in [y]our news reporting" that you pledged to us in 2014.⁸

Is it any wonder that President Trump mocks CNN as "fake news,"⁹ that the network was snubbed by Vice President Pence¹⁰ and that it receives poor access at White House press events?¹¹

I'm inquiring about CNN's bias and our return on investment. Half of the American public – which includes potential and current CNN viewers – voted for Trump last November and supports his agenda. CNN acts as if it is part of the anti-Trump resistance. Are you willing to lose viewers, possibly forever, because of the bias?

Furthermore, are you willing to lose advertiser revenue? The Media Research Center is going to begin alerting the advertisers of news programs that peddle “smear, hate and political extremism” and pressure them to defend their continued support.¹² Are you concerned about advertisers leaving CNN? Will you continue to ignore our appeals for objectivity at the risk to our investment in Time Warner? And people are wondering why you aren’t following Delta and Bank of America in dropping support of the Public Theater. Boycotts work. Just ask Bill O’Reilly.

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¹ Liam Quinn and Abigail Miller, Time Warner Under Pressure for Still Sponsoring Julius Caesar Production Which Shows ‘Donald Trump Being Murdered’ - As CNN Host Hails It as a ‘Masterpiece,’” Daily Mail, June 12, 2017, available at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4597400/Time-Warner-fire-backing-Trump-killing-play.html> as of June 13, 2017.

² “Sandra Gonzalez, “CNN Fires Kathy Griffin,” CNNMoney, May 31, 2017, available at <http://money.cnn.com/2017/05/31/media/cnn-kathy-griffin/index.html> as of June 10, 2017.

³ Brian Stelter, “CNN Cancels Reza Aslan’s Show ‘Believer’ After Profane Anti-Trump Tweets,” CNNMoney, June 9, 2017, available at <http://money.cnn.com/2017/06/09/media/cnn-reza-aslan-decision/index.html> as of June 10, 2017.

⁴ Time Warner Chairman and CEO Jeff Bewkes Questioned About CNN’s Liberal Bias,” National Center for Public Policy Research, June 16, 2014, available at http://www.nationalcenter.org/PR-Time_Warner_CNN_061614.html as of June 10, 2017

⁵ “Time Warner Criticized for Public’s Misperception of Gun Crime in America,” National Center for Public Policy Research, May 23, 2013, available at http://www.nationalcenter.org/PR-Time_Warner_052313.html as of June 10, 2017.

⁶ “CNN’s Increased Ideological Diversity Applauded,” National Center for Public Policy Research, June 17, 2016, available at http://www.nationalcenter.org/PR-Time_Warner_CNN_061716.html as of June 10, 2017.

⁷ Rich Noyes, “Study: CNN is Completely Obsessed with Donald Trump - And Not in a Good Way,” NewsBusters, Media Research Center, May 16, 2017, available at <http://www.newsbusters.org/print/189131> as of June 10, 2017.

⁸ Paul Bond, “Time Warner CEO Defends CNN Over Liberal Bias Charge at Shareholders Meeting,” Hollywood Reporter, June 13, 2014, available at <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/time-warner-ceo-defends-cnn-711814> as of June 10, 2017.

⁹ Rebecca Savransky, “Trump Berates CNN Reporter: ‘You are Fake News,’” The Hill, January 11, 2017, available at <http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/313777-trump-berates-cnn-reporter-for-fake-news> as of June 10, 2017.

¹⁰ Joe Concha, “Pence to Appear on Four Sunday Shows, But Skipping CNN,” The Hill, February 2, 2017, available at <http://thehill.com/homenews/media/317892-pence-to-appear-on-four-sunday-shows-but-skipping-cnn> as of June 10, 2017.

¹¹ Tony Lee, “CNN, NYT Reporters Whine After Trump WH Relegates Them to ‘Siberia’ Section,” Breitbart, June 9, 2017, available at <http://www.breitbart.com/big-journalism/2017/06/09/cnn-new-york-times-whine-relegated-siberia-trump-press-conference/> as of June 10, 2017.

¹² Olivia Beavers, “Conservative Groups Target Maddow Advertisers After Hannity Loses Ads,” The Hill, May 31, 2017, available at <http://thehill.com/homenews/media/335785-conservative-groups-targeting-maddow-advertisers> as of June 10, 2017.