

Excerpted from the The Daily Kos, Wednesday, August 7, 2013.

## **DO WE HAVE A LIBERAL MEDIA?**

Let's take a look at some big issues and see where the media stands.

### **1. Where the jobs went.**

Outsourcing (or offshoring) is a bigger contributor to unemployment in the U.S. than laziness.

Since 2000, U.S. multinationals have cut 2.9 million jobs here while increasing employment overseas by 2.4 million. This is likely just the tip of the iceberg as multinational corporations account for only about 20% of the labor force.

When was the last time you saw a front-page headline about outsourcing?

### **2. Upward wealth redistribution and/or inequality.**

In 2010, 20% of the people held approximately 88% of the net worth in the U.S. The top 1% alone held 35% of all net worth.

The bottom 80% of people held only 12% of net worth in 2010. In 1983, the bottom 80% held 18% of net worth.

These statistics are not Democratic or Republican. They are widely available to reporters. Why aren't they discussed in the "liberal" media?

### **3. ALEC.**

If there were a corporate organization that drafted laws and then passed them on to legislators to implement, wouldn't you think the "liberal" media would report on that organization?

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is such an organization. Need legislation drafted? No need to go through a lobbyist to reach state legislatures anymore. Just contact ALEC. Among other things, ALEC is responsible for:

Stand Your Ground laws

Voter ID laws

Right to Work laws

Privatizing schools

Health savings account bills which benefit health care companies

Tobacco industry legislation

Many legislators don't even change the proposals handed to them by this group of corporations. They simply take the corporate bills and bring them to the legislative floor.

This is the primary reason for so much similar bad legislation in different states.

#### **4. The number of people in prison.**

Which country in the world has the most people in prison?

You might think it would be China (with 1+ billion people and a restrictive government) or former Soviets still imprisoned in Russia.

Wrong. The United States has the most people in prison by far of any country in the world. With 5% of the world's population, we have 25% of the world's prisoners – 2.3 million criminals. China with a population 4 times our size is second with 1.6 million people in prison.

In 1972, 350,000 Americans were imprisoned. In 2010, this number had grown to 2.3 million. Yet from 1988 – 2008, crime rates have declined by 25%.

#### **5. The number of black people in prison.**

In 2009, non-Hispanic blacks, while only 13.6% of the population, accounted for 39.4% of the total prison and jail population.

In 2011, according to FBI statistics, whites accounted for 69.2% of arrests.

Numbers like these suggest a racial bias in our justice system.

To me, this is a much bigger story than any single incident like Trayvon Martin. Or, at the very least, why didn't the "liberal media" ever mention this while covering the Martin story?

#### **6. U.S. health care costs are the highest in the world.**

The expenditure per person last year in the U.S. was \$8,233. Norway was second with \$5,388. Total amount of GDP spent on health care is also the highest of any country in the world at 17.6 percent. The next closest country is the Netherlands at 12%.

As a liberal, I'd like to ask why the market isn't bringing down costs. I'd think a "liberal" media might too.

#### **7. Glass-Steagall.**

The Glass-Steagall Act separated risky financial investments from government backed deposits for 66 years.

The idea is simple. Banks were prohibited from using your federally insured savings to make risky investments.

Why is this a good idea? Risky investments should be risky. If banks can use federally insured funds, there is no risk to them. If they win, they win. If they lose, we cover the cost.

Elizabeth Warren does a great job explaining this to the "liberal news" desk at CNBC:

### **8. Gerrymandering.**

When was the last time you saw a front page headline about gerrymandering?

Before the 2010 election, conservatives launched a plan to win control of state legislatures before the census. The idea was to be in power when national congressional districts were redrawn in order to fix them so Republicans would win a majority of districts.

The Republican sponsored Redistricting Majority Project was hugely successful. In 2012, Barack Obama was elected President by nearly 3.5 million votes. In Congressional races, Democrats drew nearly 1.4 million more votes than Republicans yet Republicans won control of the House 234 seats to 201 seats.

How is this possible?

By pumping \$30 million into state races to win the legislatures, Republicans redrew state maps in states such as Arizona, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Texas, Florida and Ohio to place all of the Democrats into just a few districts. In this manner, Democrats win heavily in a couple districts and lose the rest.

In North Carolina, the statewide vote was 51 percent Democrat and 49 percent Republican yet 9 Republicans won and only 4 Democrats.

Where is your coverage of this vote stealing, "liberal media"? You're willing to cover voter ID laws, why can't you cover real vote stealing?

### **9. The number of bills blocked by Republicans in Congress.**

The filibuster has been used a record number of time since Obama was elected President. From 2008-2012, 375 bills weren't even allowed to come to a vote in the Senate because Republicans threatened the filibuster.

In 2013, during the first 6 months, Congress has only passed 15 bills that were signed into law. This is 8 fewer than in the first 6 months of 2012 and 19 fewer than 2011.

Also, until the Senate recently threatened to reform the filibuster, the GOP had succeeded in holding up 79 of President Obama's picks to the U.S. Circuit Court and Courts of Appeal. They're blocking these appointments regardless of qualification.

Where's the coverage? Where are the reporters asking why nothing is getting done?

## **10. The Citizens' United Supreme Court decision**

In a 2011 Hart poll, only 22% of those polled had actually heard of the Citizens' United decision before taking the survey.

If 77% believe that corporations have more control over our political process than people, why isn't the liberal media talking more about the Citizens' United decision?

## **11. Nixon's Southern Strategy.**

The Southern Strategy is a strategy for gaining political power by exploiting the greatest number of ethnic prejudices. Kevin Philips, Republican and Nixon campaign strategist, speaking about this strategy in a 1970 interview with the New York Times:

"From now on, the Republicans are never going to get more than 10 to 20 percent of the Negro vote and they don't need any more than that...but Republicans would be shortsighted if they weakened enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. The more Negroes who register as Democrats in the South, the sooner the Negrophobe whites will quit the Democrats and become Republicans. That's where the votes are. Without that prodding from the blacks, the whites will backslide into their old comfortable arrangement with the local Democrats."

This strategy has been used since President Johnson and Democrats in Congress passed the Civil Rights Act to build the Republican party.

Examples of this strategy were evident as recently as 2008 and 2012 as Republicans took up their assault on Medicaid, Social Security, labor unions, and Obamacare – programs which, though they benefit more white seniors, retirees, women, and children, have been sold to many Americans as handouts to lazy, undeserving blacks and minorities.

Yet you never hear the "liberal media" (at least since the 1970 NY Times) talking about the use of this strategy. At least not like this:

"P (President) emphasized that you have to face the fact that the whole problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to." - H.R. Haldeman's diary, President Richard Nixon's White House Chief of Staff

## **12. Tax cuts primarily benefit the wealthy.**

A progressive tax program is designed to tax people very little as they are starting out and progressively increase their rates as they do better.

Republican plans seem designed to do exactly the opposite: shift the tax burden off of the wealthy and onto working people.

Take the repeal of the estate tax. In Ohio this was recently repealed by Republicans. The benefit is only realized by people with estates larger than \$338,000 (as the first \$338k was exempt) and realized most by people with even wealthier estates.

This also explains why Republicans want to shift the system from income taxes to consumption taxes. Consumption taxes are paid most by those at the bottom as basic consumption remains the same regardless of income.

It also explains why capital gain taxes are so low. Income through capital gains is only taxed at 20% (increased from 15% in 2012) instead of at the rate of other income (closer to 35%).

It also explains why Republicans were so willing to let the payroll tax cut expire. The payroll tax cut benefited people who were getting paid, not those issuing the paychecks. How much fight did you see to save this tax cut?

While tax cuts are sold to us as benefiting everyone, they really benefit a select few at the very top.

If everyone knew who tax cuts really benefit, would so many people vote for them?

### **13. What's happening to the bees?**

40-50% of commercial U.S. bee hives were lost this year to colony collapse disorder.

This seems like an odd one to include, why is this important?

The Agriculture Department says a quarter of the American diet depends on pollination by honeybees.

Dating from 2006, colony collapse disorder is a relatively new problem. More "liberal media" coverage might push the urgency of the issue.

Instead here's a typical media story about bees: Thousands of Bees Attack Texas Couple, Kill Horses.

### **14. The impact of temporary workers on our economy.**

The number of temporary workers has grown by more than 50 percent since the recession ended to nearly 2.7 million.

If freelancers, contract workers, and consultants are included, the number is nearly 17 million workers not directly employed by the companies who hire them. This equals 12 percent of the work. What's the impact of a "just in time" workforce on workers and our economy? How about that for a story "liberal media"?

### **15. Media Consolidation**

Six corporations - Time Warner, Disney, News Corporation, Viacom, Comcast, and CBS - control roughly 90% of the media in the U.S.

These companies are in business to make a profit.

This is why you'll find plenty of advertisements in the media. Entertainment? Check. Sports? Definitely. Weather? Yep.

You'll also find plenty of "if it bleeds, it leads" stories designed to hook you in. Vendors, witnesses recall Venice hit-and-run horror. Fort Hood trial turns bizarre as shooter grills witnesses.

There's also plenty of political bickering: Democrats said this, Republicans said that. We let you decide (but we never weigh in with any facts or fact-checking).

What won't you hear? You won't hear the "liberal media" discuss the corporate media.

What to make of this

If the media were "liberal," it would serve the public interest and shine a light on issues like the ones above.

More people would also have a better understanding of global warming, peak oil, population growth, political lobbying, government's role in a functioning economy, how much we spend on the military, and countless other issues.

What you're more likely to see in the media, however, are stories designed to get you to buy their paper, or watch their show, or listen to their radio station. If it bleeds, it leads. This is why the media is concerned with scandal, celebrities, gossip, and fear.