

The Media vs. America

By James Simpson

Summary: Left-wing bias continues to seep into media coverage, worsening by the year and now going so far as to cover up national security scandals. Major donors support efforts by activist groups like CREW, Media Matters for America, and ProPublica to make the problem even worse.

At a recent conference sponsored by Accuracy in Media, Democratic pollster and pundit Pat Caddell said that the media is “the enemy of America.” He wasn’t kidding. While conceding the media’s longstanding liberal bias, Caddell said that media outlets “crossed some lines” recently. He specifically accused them of suppressing critical national security information following the deadly September 11 attack this year in Benghazi, Libya, merely to protect President Obama from embarrassment:

The press’s job is to stand in the ramparts and protect the liberty and freedom of all of us from a government and from organized governmental power. When they desert those ramparts and decide that they will now become active participants, that their job is not simply to tell you who you may vote for, and who you may not, but, worse—and this is the danger of the last two weeks—what truth that you may know, as an American,



and what truth you are not allowed to know, they have, then, made themselves a fundamental threat to the democracy, and, in my opinion, *made themselves the enemy of the American people* [emphasis added].

The Benghazi episode is only the latest example of media malpractice. There are countless examples stretching back years. Bill Clinton’s end-run around presidential appointee background checks allowed the Communist Chinese widespread access to

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critical classified military technology, a story the media largely ignored to our great peril (see Bill Gertz's book *Betrayal*). Even media preoccupation with Clinton's sexual scandals sought to downplay them and ridicule his enemies. Suppressed stories from the 2008 elections could fill books, and they have.

This is an entrenched, systemic problem, and it exists whenever and wherever the Left sees an opportunity to influence the public. For instance, the debate moderator for this year's vice presidential debate was ABC News correspondent Martha Raddatz. How many Americans know she had a special guest at her 1991 wedding to current FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski; namely, longtime Genachowski friend and Harvard classmate, Barack Obama? ABC News did not feel the need to mention this before the story broke at DailyCaller.com. Afterwards, ABC defended its choice by noting that Genachowski and Raddatz have been divorced since 1997.

So what's the problem? It didn't concern the Commission on Presidential Debates, which

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chooses debate moderators. Raddatz, after all, is no different from the other moderators, all pulled from the Left media and reliable Democratic defenders: CNN's Candy Crowley, CBS's Bob Scheiffer, and of course Jim Lehrer of PBS, a network that receives millions a year in federal subsidies.

Crowley's behavior while moderating the second presidential debate was arguably even more egregious than Raddatz's. During the Oct. 16 debate, Crowley interrupted GOP candidate Mitt Romney 28 times. She interrupted Obama only 9 times, and four of those were necessitated by Obama's refusal to respect time limits.

The most brazen interruption came near the debate's end. GOP candidate Mitt Romney said "it took the president 14 days before he called the attack in Benghazi an act of terror." President Obama interjected, saying "Get the transcript." Amazingly, Crowley assumed the role of fact-checker in addition to moderator, and told Romney he was wrong. The problem is he wasn't.

At the White House on Sept. 12, Obama said an anti-Islam video had provoked the attack. Obama said what happened in Benghazi was "a terrible act" and promised that "justice will be done." He didn't say the events in Benghazi were instigated by terrorists. He restated longstanding U.S. policy, saying "no acts of terror would shake the resolve of this great nation." Over the following two weeks, the Obama administration continued to resist calling the events in Benghazi a terrorist attack.

After the debate, Crowley acknowledged on CNN that Romney had been right all along but blamed him for not speaking with sufficient precision. Romney "was right in the main, but I just think he picked the wrong word," said Crowley.

The Commission on Presidential Debates apparently didn't have a problem with Candy Crowley either. But then the Commission has problems of its own. A run down of the Commissioners reveals a stacked deck of Obama supporters and longtime Democrat insiders including Antonia Hernandez, former president of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF, an illegal alien advocacy group); Howard Buffett, son of billionaire Obama supporter Warren Buffett; former Citigroup chief and Obama pal, Richard Parsons; early Obama supporter and former Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairman, Newton Minow; Ted Kennedy Senate replacement appointee Paul Kirk; and others. The Commission co-chair is Mike McCurry, President Clinton's former press secretary.

Republicans are pathetically represented by two ancient, former Republican senators, Alan Simpson and John Danforth. Simpson earlier this year called himself a Republican in Name Only, and Danforth trashed his party when interviewed in May by the left-wing website ThinkProgress.org. The Republican co-chairman, Frank Farenkopf, once headed the Republican National Committee but now is a casino lobbyist who endorsed his pal Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) in 2010. Fairness and balance, Democrat-style.

Meanwhile Commission Director Janet Brown, another RINO Washington insider, worked on Danforth's Senate staff in an earlier day. Brown has directed the Commission for its entire 25-year history. She makes a cool \$249,000 annual salary for arranging a few presidential debates every four years. Nice work if you can get it, but guess what? You can't.

But back to Julius. Obama appointed Genachowski to head the FCC in 2009 after he had worked on the presidential campaign.

Genachowski brought us the policy of “net neutrality,” which promises unprecedented and unwanted federal government intrusion into the internet. His imposition of this new rule, like many promulgated by this administration, has been challenged for violating both the will of Congress and the courts (see “Pew and the Gang Ride Again,” *Foundation Watch*, April 2011).

Significantly, Genachowski visited the White House 81 times between January 2009 and November 2010, while net neutrality was under consideration. The FCC’s Democratic commissioners adopted new net neutrality rules in December 2010 over the objections of their Republican counterparts, who noted that a federal court had earlier declared the FCC had no authority to issue such edicts.

Congressman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) questioned the FCC’s independence, considering the huge number of White House visits, which Issa said equaled the combined visits of the Secretaries of Energy, Defense, Treasury, Homeland Security, and State within the same timeframe. Might Genachowski have recently arranged some pre-debate “coaching” of his ex-wife before the debate? It would not be difficult to believe. She certainly allowed Vice President Biden to rudely interrupt and talk over Republican vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan throughout the debate, and frequently stopped Ryan from finishing his thoughts.

In that debate and the first and second presidential debates, all the moderators allowed the Democrat on stage to have several more minutes to talk than the Republicans.

The George Soros-funded Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW; 2010 revenues, \$2.6 million) also sent a letter to Genachowski last May, demanding that he pull Fox News’ FCC

license because of the controversy embroiling Fox’s parent NewsCorp in Great Britain. Genachowski said he takes such complaints “seriously.” (<http://thehill.com/blogs/hillicon-valley/technology/226513-fcc-takes-very-seriously-calls-to-pull-foxs-broadcast-licenses>).

Soros has pulled out all the stops to influence American news media. While pushing officials to move against Fox publicly through CREW, Soros was also instrumental behind the scenes in getting Glenn Beck removed from Fox. His subtle methods may have included direct threats to Fox employees. But Soros and his leftist allies have sought to influence news more directly. Soros money funds a number of influential nonprofit media enterprises, including the notorious left-wing attack group Media Matters, ProPublica, and the Center for American Progress Action Fund’s ThinkProgress blog.

Think Progress

The radical website ThinkProgress is a project of the Center for American Progress’s Action Fund (CAP AF). Its objective is to “advance progressive ideas and message through traditional news media along with on-line reporting....” The Fund also works with “citizens” and executive and legislative branch policymakers to “impact the national debate and transform progressive ideas into policy....”

It bills itself as “non-partisan,” but the Center for American Progress is the brainchild of former Clinton and Obama advisor John Podesta. It is a far-left organization whose board includes former Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle (D-S.D.); Aryeh Neier, president emeritus of Soros’s Open Society Institute; and Progressive Insurance magnate Peter Lewis. (The recently deceased subprime mortgage magnate, Marion Sandler, served on the board at the

time of her death.) Former members include self-described communist Van Jones and Obama’s “Global Warming Czar” Carol Browner, who also served for eight years as Bill Clinton’s Environmental Protection Agency director.

As a staffer for Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Podesta helped Leahy develop the tactic of smearing and filibustering Republican judicial nominees, a practice previously unknown in Washington, according to DiscoverTheNetworks.org. He is also the author of what has come to be known as “Project Podesta”:

Project Podesta enabled the President to bypass Congress through the use of executive orders, presidential decision directives, White-House-sponsored lawsuits, vacancy appointments to high federal office, selective regulatory actions against targeted corporations, and a host of other extra-constitutional tactics. In short, Podesta showed the Clintons that they could gain by force what they might fail to achieve through legislation.

As then-Clinton White House aide Paul Begala told the *New York Times* in 1998, “Stroke of the pen. Law of the land. Kind of cool.”

ThinkProgress editors and writers compose a who’s who of left-wing journalism. Editor Judd Legum is the former research director for Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign. Deputy editor Igor Volsky is a former Russian national who co-wrote presidential candidate “Screamin’ Howard” Dean’s socialized medicine proposal. Other writers have been culled from staff of Keith Olbermann, Al-Jazeera—the English language voice of the Muslim Brotherhood—the Sierra Club, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), and other

notable examples of the unhinged Left.

They call ThinkProgress a “blog,” and it has won awards for blogging. But that is kind of like calling North Korea’s Olympic Teams “privately funded amateurs.” Similarly, ThinkProgress is a well-endowed, professional organization with highly paid “bloggers.” Its Action Fund took in a cool \$9.4 million in 2010. Despite its nonprofit status, the Fund netted \$1.5 million after paying all its expenses for two years running. For each of the past four years at least, the Fund has seen its assets rise by 16 percent.

Think Progress’s Joseph Romm edits their “Climate Progress” blog (thinkprogress.org/climate). According to CAP AF’s 2010 tax return, Romm earned a salary of \$136,241. Other “bloggers” are similarly compensated. CAP president Podesta, takes \$55,000 a year from this subsidiary, in addition to the \$274,000 a year he earns from CAP. Those two revenue streams alone put him near the dividing line for the demonized 1%. Like most fans of income redistribution, Podesta assigns himself a generous portion of the wealth the redistributionists always seem eager to spread around when it is someone else’s money.

For most real bloggers, on the other hand, maintaining a blog is the work of an individual or sometimes an ad hoc collection of volunteers. The only revenues generated are from the occasional ad and the generosity of readers. It is a labor of love and dedication, not a business. Few attempt to obtain nonprofit status and make no phony pretense at being “nonpartisan.”

Conservative bloggers receive little, if anything for their efforts, aside from being vilified by the cash-rich crybabies of the Left as “far-right extremists,” “stooges of big

oil,” or the Southern Poverty Law Center’s favorite: “Hate Groups.” These are all defamatory smears, which conservatives rarely have the resources, time, or inclination to challenge in court.

CAP AF reveals little of their funding sources, but according to the 990 tax returns of their parent organization, Center for American Progress, most of CAP AF’s revenues (\$5.4 million in 2010) come directly from CAP. CAP in turn receives big money from the usual suspects.

Board member Marion Sandler, who died this June, had paid a lot for her seat on the CAP board. According to Foundation Search, the Sandler Foundation gave CAP a whopping \$24 million between 2005 and 2011. George Soros’s Open Society Institute and Foundation to Promote Open Society contributed \$5.5 million for that period. The various Rockefeller funds provided \$4.6 million. Ford added another \$2.5 million. Tides kicked in a mere \$1.2 million. Obama’s old Joyce Foundation offered \$863,000.

A lot of investment houses “invest” in CAP too. The charitable funds of Charles Schwab, Fidelity, Vanguard, and Goldman Sachs sent a combined total of \$4 million during this period. These monies came from “donor-advised funds,” in which individual investors indicate where they want their money donated. Sometimes fund advisors assist with these decisions, sometimes the choice comes from the individual donor; so either the donors are ignorant of CAP’s radical designs and leftist advisors have cleverly “advised” them to steer money into left-wing organizations, or the donors know what they’re doing, and a lot of leftists are actually 1 percenters. No big surprise there. Still, it’s amazing that investment company dollars find their way

into the coffers of those who wish to end the free enterprise system.

ThinkProgress like the rest of the left-wing commentariat shows incredible blindness to facts when it comes to defending its narrative. As I write, the Middle East is in an uproar, the president is doubling down on Big Bird. Yet ThinkProgress devotes its front page to *Solyndra*; not to dig into this multi-million-dollar corruption scandal, but to declare Solyndra and the Obama administration innocent simply because no one could get them to admit they are guilty!

(<http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/10/10/987251/exclusive-special-interest-groups-spent-nearly-11-million-on-solyndra-attack-ads-since-april/>)

Meanwhile, Solyndra is just the tip of the crony-capitalist scandal iceberg. One of the latest revelations finds that the administration’s infamous TracFone Wireless cell phone giveaway program directly benefits the president’s political supporters. TracFone president Frederick Pollak has given more than \$365,000 to Obama and the Democrats since 2007. His wife is a bundler for the Obama reelection campaign, having raised over \$1.5 million for him since 2007; \$632,000 in this cycle so far. TracFone receives a subsidy for participating in the program.

This is classic Chicago style corruption: you-scratch-my-back-I’ll-scratch-yours. Where is CAP AF on this scandal? Nowhere to be found. Even though the FCC’s Genachowski admitted earlier this year that waste and fraud was occurring in the giveaway program because some people were obtaining multiple “free” phones.

Similarly, the Soros-funded CREW can’t seem to find anything wrong with the Obama White House, despite its stated mission to

“ensure government officials—regardless of party affiliation—act with honesty and integrity and merit the public trust.” CREW spares no expense, however, in attacking Republicans. CREW has issued a call to “End Secret Spending by Tax-Exempt Groups.” That might be a good idea if CREW included groups like CREW, which doesn’t disclose its donors. But they have other things in mind.

The CREW website features a project titled “Dark Money” focusing on those few corporations that provide funding for non-leftist causes. One of its entries breathlessly describes how, for example, AETNA Life Insurance Company has contributed more than \$3.3 million to the American Action Network (AAN) and nearly \$4.5 million to the Chamber of Commerce.

(<http://www.citizensforethics.org/blog/entry/melanie-sloan-end-secret-spending-by-tax-exempt-groups>)

AAN, which CREW describes as a “shadowy 501(c)(4) organization,” describes itself as an “... ‘action tank’ that will create, encourage and promote center-right policies based on the principles of freedom, limited government, American exceptionalism, and strong national security.” *Now that is scary!*

AAN is run by former Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.), a moderate Republican who even earned good marks from some unions and liberal groups (<http://votesmart.org/candidate/evaluations/20239#.UHhx2sXA9CM>). Coleman, you will recall, lost his 2008 re-election bid to comedian Al Franken after a dubious recount vote presided over by the Soros-supported, ACORN-connected Secretary of State Mark Richie. No wonder the Left is so upset. Don’t expect we’ll be hearing much about that election from CREW though. (<http://washingtonexaminer.com/york-when-1099-felons-vote-in>

race-won-by-312-ballots/article/2504163#.UHixJa5iTHo)

CREW participated with ProPublica in a New York public radio program discussing “Dark Money and Big Data”. (<http://www.citizensforethics.org/blog/entry/revealing-dark-money-and-big-data>) But CREW receives quite a bit of “dark money” itself. In 2010, CREW received \$415,000 from Soros foundations. This represented 16 percent of CREW’s 2010 revenues. In 2008, Soros donated \$300,000. PBL Fund, a philanthropy of Progressive Insurance magnate Peter B. Lewis, donated \$396,354 to CREW in 2008. The Gill Foundation, “Advocates for LGBT Equality,” has provided a total of \$426,000 since 2006. The Tides Center and Tides Foundation have together contributed \$300,000 since 2002. CREW’s expenses were \$2.8 million in 2010 against revenues of \$2.6 million.

ProPublica

Interestingly, ProPublica also runs a “Dark Money” project, and focuses on, you guessed it, those bad Republicans, and how they are spending money to win elections. Its website mentions the usual suspects: the Koch brothers, Sheldon Adelson, Americans for Prosperity, Crossroads GPS, the American Future Fund, and others. Included is only one obscure Democrat group promoting Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) (<http://www.propublica.org/article/how-nonprofits-spend-millions-on-elections-and-call-it-public-welfare>)

Most of ProPublica’s “investigations” serve to promote the Left’s narrative but do not necessarily shed light on anything. For example, its research on the foreclosure crisis focuses on the role of banks, and largely ignores the fundamental cause: a decades-long leftist effort to force banks to provide home

mortgages to uncreditworthy customers. Another example: the “Detention Dilemma” category focuses on the plight of Guantanamo Bay terrorists and their alleged torture at the hands of their American captors.

ProPublica’s 2011 revenues were \$10.1 million. In the past two years it has received \$14.5 million from the Sandler Foundation. It also receives funds from George Soros’s Foundation for an Open Society, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ford, MacArthur, and donor-advised fund donations from Schwab and Goldman Sachs. (For more on ProPublica and its backing by subprime mortgage bankers Herb and Marion Sandler, see the May 2009 *Foundation Watch*.)

Media Matters

Perhaps the most notorious of Soros’s media propaganda vehicles is Media Matters for America. They do not so much write stories as rebuttals. And they rove the Internet, waiting to pounce on anyone willing to criticize Democrats. Furthermore, this is not performed in a dispassionate, circumspect manner, but with a snarky, childish “gotcha!” tone. Recent entries include:

- * Rush Limbaugh joins the attack on moderator Martha Raddatz. (Will we be next?)
- * What Wisconsin journalists want you to know about Paul Ryan.
- * Fox Seizes On Out-Of-Context

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Quote To Defend Jobs Numbers Conspiracy. (So it's a conspiracy now?)

* Tucker Carlson, Still Confused About Media Bias

And so forth. The attack on vote fraud expert John Fund is a good example of Media Matters' style. At David Horowitz's Restoration Weekend in November 2009, Fund erroneously cited Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) as co-sponsoring a plan to enact nationwide universal voter registration, along with Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.).

<http://www.examiner.com/article/what-the-dems-know-that-we-don-t-universal-voter-registration>).

"Universal voter registration" would automatically register names on public databases to vote. In addition to its unconstitutional aspect, universal voter registration would create a nightmare of verification and duplication problems, leading to unprecedented voter fraud. Given their campaign to resist voter integrity efforts and their valiant defense of ACORN, we know that leftists don't object to vote fraud.

But John Fund committed a cardinal sin. According to Media Matters, he lied, because he said that Barney Frank was the bill's co-sponsor, when in fact it was Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.). An article by this writer and others followed suit, so *we promoted the lie!* Actually, Fund issued an apology, I issued a correction, and that was that. Simple mistake. Anyone could make it. But to the fever swamp at Media Matters, it was a conservative conspiracy to match the CIA plot to kill John F. Kennedy.

Media Matters also receives funding from the usual suspects. George Soros's Founda-

tion to Promote an Open Society donated \$675,000 in 2010 alone. The Sandler Fund provided \$400,000 over two years. The Tides Foundation has provided \$3.5 million since 2003, most coming between 2008 and 2010. Tides is a donor-advised fund and its many donors do not want to be publicly identified as supporting Media Matters.

The Pritzker Family Foundation donated \$400,000 between 2007 and 2009. Hotel and finance magnate Penny Pritzker is an Obama insider and was finance director for his 2008 campaign. The Picower Foundation provided \$100,000 in 2008, shortly before the fund was discovered to have received most of its endowment from the Bernard Madoff scheme. The Picower family has since returned to authorities a record \$7.2 billion for its role in the scandal. As with CAP AF, the investment firms of Fidelity, Goldman Sachs, and Vanguard passed along a combined \$763,000 to Media Matters between 2005 and 2010, even though it's hard to imagine investment firms existing for long if Media Matters' policy agenda were completely implemented.

So is there no accountability? What about the supposedly "nonpartisan" Public Broadcasting System and National Public Radio?

In the first presidential debate, Mitt Romney said to moderator Jim Lehrer, "I'm sorry, Jim, I'm gonna stop the subsidy to PBS. I like PBS, I love Big Bird—I actually like you too—but I am not going to keep spending money on things [we have] to borrow money from China to pay for." The comment set off a firestorm. The social media site Twitter recorded 135,000 "tweets" [comments] per minute. (http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/presidential-debates-10-million-tweets_b29439)

But Romney's point was not about Big Bird and Sesame Street, which only received about 5 percent of its 2010 funding from federal subsidies and prospered through millions of dollars in product sales and private donations. Romney's point was about PBS and its parent, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which partially funds independent PBS stations all over the country.

CPB's annual appropriation from Congress runs about \$0.5 billion annually. It won't put much of a chink in our \$16 trillion national debt, but the government is saturated with these small, unnecessary, and often redundant programs. They add up.

In addition, despite its supposedly "nonpartisan" charter, public television is, if possible, even further to the left than broadcast TV and the newspapers. Brandon Darby is a case in point. Darby was a movement leftist who had an epiphany when he realized that the Left serves no one but itself, and creates more problems than it solves for the people it claims to help. Darby saw this firsthand during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina when he spent extensive time in New Orleans' ninth ward assisting in recovery efforts. Leftists thwarted his efforts at every turn, and even threatened him, because he wasn't doing things their way.

Still perceived as an insider, Darby continued to obtain information from other radicals regarding their various machinations. At one point he learned that radical leftists planned to firebomb the 2008 Minneapolis Republican National Convention, and he decided to penetrate the group as an FBI informant. Thanks to his brave efforts, potential murder was averted, and the Left's other efforts to disrupt the convention were stymied.

For his trouble, Darby was the subject of slanderous attacks in the press, led by an article in the *New York Times* that accused him of provoking the bombings. Darby sued and the *Times* had to issue a retraction.

The *New York Times* has fallen far from covering only the “news that’s fit to print,” if it was ever actually there to begin with. Today the *Times* fits right in with the anarchist Occupy movement. One of its reporters covering Occupy was discovered actually participating in the planning and execution of Occupy protests and was arrested in New York along with other Occupy activists. (<http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2011/10/23/New-Video-Reveals-New-York-Times-Reporter-Natasha-Lennard-Is--OccupyWallStreet-Activist--Supporter>)

Public radio ran a story on Darby called “Turncoat.” For the Left it was actually a relatively balanced piece, including many segments of an interview with Brandon. But in the end, the piece could not resist blaming him for the conviction of the two would-be bombers. The narrator explained that Darby could have used the wisdom gained by years of activism to convince the others to renounce violence. (<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/381/turncoat?act=2>)

Finally, PBS produced a Point Of View film titled “Better This World,” which received an Emmy nomination and other awards. PBS describes the film:

Better This World follows the radicalization of these boyhood friends from Midland, Texas, under the tutelage of revolutionary activ-

ist Brandon Darby. The results: eight homemade bombs, multiple domestic terrorism charges and a high-stakes entrapment defense hinging on the actions of a controversial FBI informant. *Better This World* goes to the heart of the war on terror and its impact on civil liberties and political dissent in post-9/11 America.

This film once again reiterates the false narrative first reported by the *New York Times*. (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/blog/pov-docs/2012/09/emmy-2012-watch-best-documentary-nominee-better-this-world/>).

America is facing a crisis of misinformation from an unscrupulous minority bent on replacing our republican form of government with its largely self-serving socialist vision. We are funding much of this with our own tax dollars. That funding should dry up. If the Left wants to participate in the marketplace of ideas, it can do so on its own dime.

Pundits characterize the mass media as “in the tank” for Obama, or Clinton, or whoever is the anointed left-wing public figure of the day. But the media is not “in the tank” for anyone. Leftists strategize endlessly on how to capture and manipulate public opinion, whether it be in media, or public institutions or on college campuses. They are proactive and relentless. The media don’t follow anyone. To the contrary, today’s mass media executives are key leaders in the far left movement. Everything they do is calculated on the prospects for capturing hearts and minds. They are not opposed to deception, and we should not be entirely surprised at the lengths to which they will go.

But as John Adams wisely said, “Facts are stubborn things.” The truth has the annoying habit of sticking with us when we hear it, because it usually rings true. As long as we have the capability to bring truth to the public, our Republic stands a chance. If the Left continues to successfully overwhelm us with propaganda and lies, and continues using the organs of government to misinform and silence us, the fight will be over and we will lose.

James Simpson is an economist, businessman, and freelance writer. His writings have been published in Accuracy in Media, American Thinker, Big Government, Washington Times, WorldNetDaily, FrontPage Magazine, and elsewhere.

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PhilanthropyNotes

Political candidates' grumbling about the charitable deduction has many donors, grant makers, and nonprofit experts worried, the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* reports. At the **Philanthropy Roundtable's** annual conference last month, noted election law attorney **Cleta Mitchell** argued that losing the deduction would devastate the philanthropy world. "Stop calling it a deduction and start calling it an incentive," said Mitchell. "If you give money to charity, it should not be defined as income." Mitchell said the Constitution or the federal tax code should be amended to ensure that donors will be allowed to reduce their gross income by the amount they give to charity. President **Obama** proposed capping all deductions at 28 percent for the wealthiest Americans, while **Mitt Romney** has repeatedly vowed to limit total deductions to \$17,000 for middle-income families and lower for the wealthy.

In a jab at electoral integrity groups, liberal billionaire **William Louis-Dreyfus** ostentatiously gave \$1 million to left-wing so-called voting rights groups. The commodities kingpin ran an ad in the *New York Times* announcing his donation to groups such as the **Brennan Center for Justice at New York University** that are fighting desperately needed voter ID laws. "It struck me that there was an unexplainable inattention in the country over what for me can only be interpreted as a direct attack on our democracy," Louis-Dreyfus said. Groups like the Brennan Center claim voter ID laws are aimed at preventing the poor and minorities from voting.

The 400 nonprofit groups that raise the most from private sources achieved a median 7.5-percent gain last year, the third straight year of median gains for these nonprofits in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy's* Philanthropy 400 rankings. But those 400 groups did much better than the rest of the nonprofit world, where charitable giving rose under 1 percent last year. The Philanthropy 400 is "a bellwether of giving trends because the charities on the list collect \$1 of every \$4 donated by individuals, corporations, and foundation," according to the newspaper.

Goldman Sachs WATCH

"In the first case of its kind, a unit of Goldman Sachs Group Inc. settled charges that a former banker in its Boston office worked for the political campaign of a former Massachusetts treasurer while winning bond underwriting business in the state," reports the *Wall Street Journal*. Goldman employee Neil M. Morrison had worked for Tim Cahill when the latter was state treasurer and continued working for him at Goldman. To help Cahill's unsuccessful run for governor, Morrison sent hundreds of campaign-related e-mails from his Goldman account, vetted a running mate for Cahill, drafted speeches, and negotiated campaign contracts.

In return, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) charges, Morrison won 30 Massachusetts bond issues worth \$9 billion, on which Goldman earned \$7.5 million. Goldman settled with the SEC, neither admitting nor denying the charges, and agreed to pay the largest penalty ever imposed by the SEC for violating the pay-for-play rules that govern municipal bonds: \$7,558,942 in disgorgement, \$670,033 in interest, and a \$3.75 million penalty.

Goldman also agreed to "a \$4.6 million settlement on related charges with Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley." In addition Cahill faces trial "on charges he used state lottery funds to finance political ads during his run for governor."