

WASHINGTON POST NEEDS A REALITY CHECK

Jeff Bezos, the owner of the *Washington Post*, lives in the real world, but many of his readers and writers do not. He knows the media have lost their credibility but the others do not. They need a reality check.

Bezos put the squash on an editorial to endorse Kamala Harris. Now the sky is falling in Washington.

He took to the editorial page to defend his decision. Here's what he said about newspapers. "We must be accurate, and we must be believed to be accurate. It's a bitter pill to swallow, but we are failing on the second requirement. Most people believe the media is [sic] biased. Anyone who doesn't see this is paying scant attention to reality, and those who fight reality lose."

He's right. The data prove it. In the 1970s, when Gallup first started asking about the media's credibility, trust ranged from 68 percent to 72 percent. Today it is at 31 percent. That's a record low. And it may be worse than that. Another national survey, released in September by Populace, found that 24 percent *publicly* agree the media tell the truth, but only 7 percent *privately* believe they do.

Just recently, a Rasmussen survey found that 50 percent of likely voters believe the media are biased in favor of the Democrats. In fact, 49 percent agree that the media are "truly the enemy of the people." The *Washington Post* has contributed mightily to this perception.

Here's an example about the Post that shows its blatant bias against the Catholic Church (many more could be provided).

In a November 13, 2022 editorial, it was claimed that "high-

level sexual misconduct and cover-up in France shattered illusions of progress by the church toward establishing a culture of transparency and accountability in its hierarchy.”

The evidence? A retired cardinal and archbishop in France admitted to sexual misconduct with a teenage girl 35 years earlier.

At the time Bill Donohue wrote, “There are over 5,000 bishops in the world and the *Washington Post* found two of them who were involved in sexual misconduct decades ago. The paper argues that this shatters ‘illusions of progress.’” Donohue couldn’t help but say, “What is really shattered is the credibility of its editorial board.”

Those who write for the newspaper do not see themselves as biased. They see themselves as being right. Those who think otherwise are simply wrong. That is the liberal mentality, whether found in the media, education, or anywhere else.

The paper’s readers feel the same way. In retaliation against Bezos’ decision not to endorse Harris, more than 200,000 of them have canceled their digital subscription. Editorial board members and reporters are also quitting.

Journalist David Hoffman has had it, saying, “I stand against silence in the face of dictatorship.” He didn’t call him Hitler, at least not in public, but he did say, “I believe we face a very real threat of autocracy in the candidacy of Donald Trump.” His colleague, Mary Roberts, said she is quitting “because the imperative to endorse Kamala Harris over Donald Trump is as morally clear as it gets.”

As Jonathan Turley and others have documented, the Biden-Harris years represent the most anti-free speech administration in the history of the United States, yet according to the *Washington Post* they do not pose a threat to democracy—Trump does. Is there any air in their bubble?

Even richer is former Washington Post executive director Marty Baron. "To declare a moment of high principle, only 11 days before the election that is just highly suspect that is just not to be believed that this was a matter of principle at this point."

It takes gall for Baron to accuse Bezos of not being principled.

In 2018, *60 Minutes* fired its executive producer, Jeff Fager, because he was a sexual predator. He would have been fired earlier had Baron not killed a story about his behavior. [See Donohue's book, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse*, for more information on this story.]

Amy Brittain, the *Washington Post's* investigative reporter, and Irin Carmon spent four months doing a story on Fager; it was a follow-up to an earlier piece on Charlie Rose, who was fired from CBS after sexual harassment claims were made. They spoke to several women who said Fager had sexually abused them. Baron, they said, kept delaying the story and refused to speak with them. When the story finally ran, all the allegations against Fager were deleted; only additional allegations against Rose made it into the print.

Why did Baron kill the story on Fager? According to Carmon, "The close relationship between the paper and 60 Minutes" had something to do with it.

Bezos needs to clean house, and he is not alone. As the Gallup poll showed, the media are "the least trusted group among 10 U.S. civic and political institutions involved in the democratic process." Small wonder why.