

# Unfair and Unbalanced: 'The Washington Post'

✖ I was not surprised that a recent *Washington Post* article gleefully asserted that D.C.'s left leanings were confirmed in a poll. I was surprised at the seeming air of objectivity that the writers attempted to project. I was skeptical of the article and its conclusions for several reasons. First it was commissioned and paid for by the *Post* (not to impugn the work of the research company, SRBI, Inc of New York). Second a poll could yield very skewed results by focusing on selected wards. Third private polling obtained by Stand For Marriage D.C. shows very different results.

The writers asserted that their telephone survey of just over 1,135 participants showed that the majority of the city's citizens were pro same-sex marriage, for the legalization of medical marijuana and desired the creation of an elected attorney general's post. Surprisingly, in order to lend credence to their poll, *Post* writers acknowledged that 60 percent of D.C. residents would like to vote on the issue of same-sex marriage.

Before I take a moment to explain my skepticism about the *Washington Post's* poll, I would like to make

a brief statement about other marriage battles. In California, Florida and Maine opponents of traditional marriage boasted that they would achieve their first wins. Ironically, support for traditional marriage is historically underpolled as the vote against same-sex marriage in these states has shown.

I wish the *Post* would stop writing sophisticated trash talk and encourage the D.C. City Council, the U.S. Congress and the courts to let the people vote. Since their own polls suggest that most Washingtonians would like to vote on this issue, we should let the people vote.

Let's return for a moment to the incredibly slanted article. The writers boast that the average voter is in synch with the city's "progressive, activist social agenda." Although it is no secret that the *Post* has generally supported this liberal political direction, I would at least like to see a semblance of objectivity. Objectivity simply means that news is reported without bias. Further, objectivity would call opinion or advocacy pieces exactly what they are.

Yes, the paper is considered one of the most liberal or "Left leaning" papers in the nation. Nonetheless, that's no excuse for yellow journalism. Many of the residents of the District, like myself, would like to see the *Post* report the news instead of creating the news. This article,

which appeared in the “style” section of the paper, seems to be much more editorial than objectively news-based on a reportedly impartial poll. The article was a “tissue paper thin” attempt to defend the city council’s actions on a number of issues and to promote its own “Left-leaning” worldview.

From every conceivable vantage point, the *Post* seems to be committed to spending barrels of ink attempting to sell the citizens that a host of other issues are their ideas. The newspaper has been especially biased with regard to same-sex marriage. I could point to any number of instances in which this pro same-sex marriage bias has reared its manipulative head. Let me cite just one example.

D.C. metro residents noted the vitriol exchanged in the last Virginia election. Most of us will not fail to remember an unsigned editorial that called Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli a “bigot” because of his traditional views on marriage. The editorial, which appeared just days before last November’s election, was a clear “swift boating” attempt by the paper.

Why did the *Post* commission the poll and place the article in one of the most prominent locations in the paper?

First these and other *Washington Post* writers want to sell the average citizen of the District on the liberal agenda of the city council and

other power brokers in the region. Despite the council and Eleanor Holmes Norton's wheeling and dealing behind the scenes, the cry, "Let the People Vote!" has reached the ears of many on the Hill.

The second reason for the article seems to be the *Post's* need to announce to representatives on the Hill (both the Congress and the Senate) that they should not exercise their oversight responsibility concerning D.C. laws. As much as most D.C. residents want home rule, Congress still has say in the city's affairs until statehood or another governing arrangement is reached.

Every D.C. resident should be outraged by the paternalistic attitude of the *Washington Post*. They act like they know us better than we know ourselves. Their writers repeatedly allude to the race and wealth divides in the city without building racial bridges. For the *Post*, it would be more prudent if they would follow President Obama's recent example of reaching across the aisle. Instead the writers make this revealing statement, "When the GOP was in control, Congress prevented the District from setting drug laws, blocked taxpayer-financed abortions for low income women, and would not allow the city's needle exchange program to proceed ... the Democratic-controlled Congress lifted those restrictions."

Articles like these attempt to pit the people of the District against the GOP and encourage them to align with the Left. The result is unfair and unbalanced articles and reporting. Instead ideological battles, all citizens should be actively involved in creative problem solving.

All over the nation there is a growing sentiment that people want to be given proper attention by lawmakers. Whether in Massachusetts or with the Tea Party Movement in Nashville this past weekend, citizens are demanding their voices be heard. Washington, D.C. is no different than any other region. Last Tuesday Senator Robert Bennett took a bold step towards Senatorial intervention on the matter of same-sex marriage. He and eight co-sponsors introduced a bill that would stop same-sex marriages from becoming legal in the city unless approved by a referendum or vote by citizens of the District. Bennett's stand for marriage mirrors the work of GOP Congressmen Jason Chaffetz of Utah, and Jim Jordan of Ohio. These congressmen are boldly declaring the same message as their counterparts in the Senate ...Let the people vote!

No matter where you live in America, you can ensure the right of District citizens to voice their opinions through the vote. Contact your Senator and say, "I am with Senator Bennett! Let

the people of D.C. vote on marriage.”

Also, let biased media sources know that they are not representing the issues fairly. Letters to the editor, blogs, and opinion postings are all easy ways to promote democracy within the District and around the country.

Make your voice heard today!