

Harvey Cashore's Response to the *Politics in the Media: A Search for Answers* article by Margaret Smetana.

“I tend to take a different view than the one expressed by the author. I too think there are problems with the way the media portrays political events and leaders, but am not convinced that the public has lost interest in the political process because of the reporting of so-called "negative" news. I tend to believe that while the media should try to not to be biased, it is virtually impossible to escape it. Simply put, one person's "bias" might be viewed by another as objectivity. I think there are all kinds of reasons why the public may have lost some interest in the political process * but, in my view, it would be a mistake if we tried to solve the problems in ways outlined by the author. Our democratic institutions are at their most healthy when they are functioning properly. In my view the media is failing, not necessarily because it has a bias, but because it is not shedding enough light on the political process. Whether that light produces positive or negative news is, in my view, beside the point. I think the public feels disenfranchised not because there is too much negative news, but because there simply is not enough.

“Take the Gomery Commission for example. One might ask where the media was for the last seven years and why didn't more reporters in Ottawa pursue this story more carefully. Still, it would be a mistake to view the Gomery Commission today as "negative" news. The Gomery Commission is hearing witnesses day after day after day. It is shedding light on a dark corner of the political process. In my view, commissions like this might, on the one hand, make the public frustrated with our democratic institutions, but on the other, they might have Canadians understand that we live in a country where, sometimes, corruption is exposed. And if Canadians feel confident that corruption will be exposed, then perhaps the effect of that will not just mean short-term frustration but also long term confidence in our political process.”