

## Surviving another NPR (self) love fest

Several times a year, NPR and its affiliates host what they call 'pledge drives' to seduce, cajole and sometimes shame listeners into digging into their wallets and coughing up enough money to help the stations stay in business. Recently, 'my' local station, KUNM, has taken to playing short, recorded messages of support from its listeners.

They range from concise 30 second pats on the back to what wildcatters in the oil fields called 'gushers' or big strikes...in other words, embarrassments of riches. While some of these plaudits might be genuine expressions of appreciation for NPR's programming, others sound like they were drafted by an NPR internal spin doctor. After listening to about two dozen of these I have come away even more convinced than before that the bulk of the station's gushers also support a certain Democratic Party Presidential candidate and the Democratic Party in general. It's just a hunch, mind you.

While reviewing a couple of them this morning, I couldn't help wishing to myself that KUNM had bucked the national trend and instead asked its listeners to call the prescribed number and record their comments about how they REALLY view NPR's coverage of the BIG news stories of the day - whether they thought the station was even-handed or objective, or as I believe, basically in the tank for the Left. Obviously, that was not going to happen considering NPR is trying to crowd-fund to make up the difference in their federal allocation through a focused program of 'self-loving'. No, it seems there is no room in an NPR self-love fest for honesty. It's all about putting the absolute best face on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) forward and portraying it as the 'voice of the people' or a paragon of virtue.

How much do we pay for the privilege of being propagandized each year?

The CPB is not a broadcaster, but a private corporation created by Congress in 1967 with two primary functions: to serve as a firewall between partisan politics and public broadcasting and to help fund programming, stations and technology. According to the CPB's own website, American tax-payers write nearly a half billion dollar check each year to fund this organization. The CPB budget breaks down thusly: \$223 million to Public Broadcasting (TV) stations; \$77 for TV programming grants; \$69 million in direct grants to local PBS stations; \$27 million to 'system support'; \$23 million to 'Radio National Program Production and Acquisition Grants'; \$22 million to CPB administration and \$7 million to a 'Radio Program Fund'. To learn more, log on to [www.cpb.org/aboutcpb/financials/budget](http://www.cpb.org/aboutcpb/financials/budget).

This works out to about \$1.35 for each American or about 0.01% of the Federal budget. According to testimony given on the Hill to the House Appropriations Sub-Committee by CPB CEO Pat Harrison, "Federal funding is essential to the funding mix that supports public broadcasting, providing money for basic operations for many local stations. On average, stations leverage each \$1 of federal funding to raise over \$6 from local sources — "a tremendous return on the taxpayer investment."

*In general, it is public broadcasting's mission to ensure universal access to high-quality, non-commercial programming that educates, informs, enlightens and enriches the public, with a particular focus on the needs of underserved audiences, including children and people in need. In many rural areas, public broadcasting is the only source of free local, national and international news, public affairs and cultural programming. Without funding, many stations would likely be unable to continue to provide local communities with this programming.*

In addition, the CPB helps negotiate music rights for all public stations and provides administrative support, allowing stations to aggregate together for cost-effective sharing of information, research and services.

How does the funding break down for a typical local NPR affiliate?

Approximately 13% of budgeted revenue will come from the CPB. Other funding sources are: Individuals - 36%, Local businesses - 21%, Grants and other support - 14%, Miscellaneous - 7%, State funding - 5%, Special events - 3%. These percentages vary from station to station, but they point up the need for a major push for advertisers and donations (subscribers) each and every year.

What do contributors get for their contributions?

I would contend they get a politically-siloed, Left-of-center set of programming that speaks to the pursuit of one basic ideology - that of Liberalism. I'm sad to say that one seldom hears a professionally balanced report that offers comments from both sides of an issue. In fact, the choices of topics that producers make are also usually anti-Conservative. or these days, definitely anti-Trump in character. The same is true of the assumptions that NPR makes on issues like police brutality of minorities, systemic racism and just this morning on 'Morning Edition' comments by Rachel Martin that illustrated a tacit acceptance that 'climate change' is settled science in her interview with California environmental officials.

Back in 2018 there was a push to federally de-fund the CPB. That move failed and I am glad it did because it opened up a less Draconian way for those of us who feel that CPB and especially NPR has 'gone off the rails' to get back on. That opportunity lies in pressuring NPR to provide new programming that counters its Left-leaning shows like 'Democracy Now' and others. This could give a voice to the 'voiceless' millions of Conservatives who also co-sign the Feds' check to the CPB and is certainly something worth considering as we move rapidly to the finish line of the Presidential Election.

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