

The Buffalo News Employs Powerful Propaganda Methods to Push Political Agenda

By: Mike Madigan

The Buffalo News has again breached trust by placing an opinion piece on its front page above the fold and packaging it as a legitimate news story. The story was written by its propaganda and persuasion expert Jerry Zremski.

The Buffalo News is the primary printed news source for the Buffalo Area. Based on this monopoly for the printed news, The Buffalo News must be trusted not to inject propaganda and persuasion techniques on its readers to push its own political agenda, it has breached this trust. Below is a case summary of an article by Jerry Zremski where the Buffalo News and Zremski once again breach that trust:

On the front page above the fold The Buffalo News published on February 18, 2011 " **GOP's bill to cut budget would hit WNY hard – Funding for state, city, UB imperiled by House push**" By Jerry Zremski –This headline starts right out with an opinion and spin that belongs in the editorial section and not on a legitimate and unbiased newspaper front page.

- A majority of those in WNY believe that lack of such cuts in the past has already hit WNY hard and devastated its once prosperous manufacturing base. This majority would believe that failure to make such cuts currently may actually have an even greater impact on its residents than the impact of making no cuts as Zremski suggests.

Zremski employs many of the classic methods of persuasion and propaganda in this article such as:

- Zremski starts by suggesting the defunding of a luxury high speed rail (that is only a concept) will hit WNY hard. He omits the fact that it would have no impact currently in terms of jobs and the economy since it is only a concept.

- Zremski claims the city of Buffalo and University at Buffalo would be “imperiled” by the loss of millions without detailing what programs would be impacted and how this creates any such peril as he claims. The lack of substance and details suggest these funds would be hard to justify so he chose not to list them. Omission of facts is a method employed for persuasion and propaganda as in this case. A legitimate news story must show the readers the facts and data so they can decide if these programs warrant funding and whether there truly is any impact or peril associated with their loss as Zremski strongly claims.
- Zremski uses shock and awe by calling the relatively tepid proposed \$60B cut as being massive and seeks to incite a negative response from readers against the cut. If a \$60B cut in spending is massive then what term should be assigned to the 2011 \$1.4 trillion deficit?
 - To place this \$1.4 trillion deficit in context, the total amount of income taxes collected in 2010 was less than \$1 trillion. The only thing massive is the fact that the taxpaying public would have to increase their tax payments by 140% for 1 full year to pay it back. For every \$1000 in income tax paid by the taxpayer an additional \$1400 would be required to pay back this debt in 2011 alone (that is truly disturbing and massive).
- Zremski next employs the tried and true propaganda method of suggesting “local youngsters” would be impacted (think of the children...) and in this same paragraph he refers to the defunding of abortion counseling as “defunding family planning”. The lack of details again prevent readers from being able to determine if taxpayer funding is warranted and whether it would impact WNY or imperil it as he suggests.
- Zremski carefully selects certain quotes, words and phrases throughout his editorial to support his position and these selections are forms of propaganda and corrosive persuasion methods. These quotes, words and phrases are designed to incite

fear, insecurity and to persuade the reader to take action in support of the writer's position. Such methods do not belong in a legitimate news story and do not belong on the front page of a legitimate newspaper. Zremski is The Buffalo News expert in these persuasion and propaganda methods.

Quotes, phrases and words used for impact:

- "...hit WNY Hard",
- " ...Imperil"
- "House Republicans' hard line on spending".
- "and it will happen all at once"
- "massive",
- "Republicans first stab at controlling..."
- "Research cuts could gravely harm the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus"
- "huge cut"
- "The American people are not looking to completely cripple the federal government and leave the nation to the corporate elite,"

The above quotes and phrases were used to persuade and maximize the impact to the reader. They convey the perception of rashness in action and lack of responsibility in those actions. This was Zremski's objective, to push his and The Buffalo News' political opinion and agenda.

- Zremski suggested there was a debate in his article but employed the tried and true persuasion method of presenting and re-enforcing only one side of the argument which thereby suggests that the other side of the debate is not valid or worthy of review. Zremski's phrases and wording targeted the Republicans and sought to delegitimize them and their position.
 - Zremski does nothing to discuss the fact that current deficits and out of control spending is not sustainable, as stated Thursday by the Fed Chairman, and that the growing

debt crises impact may far exceed the impact these cuts may have on WNY residents.

- o Zremski's omissions are glaring throughout this editorial and reveal his bias.

Local representatives and leaders from all parties should act in the best interests of their constituents and demand that The Buffalo News conform to journalistic standards. The News must discontinue pushing its political agenda and return to accurate, factual reporting of the news. Save the spin and propaganda for the editorial and opinion page where it belongs.

The fact that The Buffalo News is a monopoly in the Buffalo market it must behave ethically and responsibly. Failure to follow appropriate journalistic standards by the News should warrant further action up to and including dissolution and replacement if necessary.

The following is the link to the referenced article:

<http://www.buffalonews.com/city/politics/article345145.ece>

For more information regarding the reform movement (all parties welcome) please visit the following sites:

For constituents from all parties that seek to interact with, support and hold their elected representatives accountable to their commitments please visit and join: <http://www.teamwatch.us/ny/>