

From: Susan Burgess
Sent: Monday, July 16, 2007 1:29 PM
To: 'tom@cwv.com'
Subject: party attitudes toward fairness doctrine

Tom,

You asked me whether Democrats tried to support the Fairness Doctrine when it was abolished and whether the Doctrine generally caused a partisan divide.

Several news articles demonstrate that:

- (1) Yes, Democrats tried to pass a law enacting the Fairness Doctrine after the FCC abolished it. Not all Dems, however, supported it. For instance, in 1987, Democratic New York Governor Mario Cuomo highly praised Reagan's veto of the Fairness Doctrine, saying the doctrine "chilled as much debate as it encouraged."
- (2) Both parties have supported and criticized the doctrine at different times in history. For instance, though Dems sought reinstatement of the law in the 80s, they fought the Doctrine in the 70s. And even in the 80s, Dems some times opposed the application of the doctrine -- in 1985, many liberals opposed the CIA's attempt to apply the fairness doctrine to an ABC News report, saying the regulation could be used to silence or intimidate reporters.

Let me know if you have other questions,
Susan