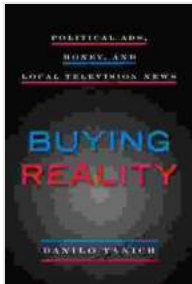


# Political Ads, Money, and Local Television News: The Impact on Civic Engagement



## Buying Reality: Political Ads, Money, and Local Television News (Donald McGannon Communication Research Center's Everett C. Parker Book Series)

by Don Watkins

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 22024 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 256 pages



In the United States, political advertising is a major part of the electoral process. Candidates for office spend millions of dollars on television, radio, and print ads to reach voters and get their message out. While some argue that political advertising is a necessary way to inform voters about the candidates and their positions, others contend that it has a negative impact on civic engagement.

This article explores the relationship between political advertising, local television news, and civic engagement. It examines the ways in which political advertising can influence the content and tone of local news coverage, and how this can affect citizens' knowledge of and participation in the political process.

## **Political Advertising and Local Television News**

Political advertising is a major source of revenue for local television stations. In 2016, candidates and political parties spent a record \$6.5 billion on television advertising. This money is used to purchase airtime during news broadcasts, as well as to produce and distribute political ads.

The presence of political advertising on local television news can have a significant impact on the content and tone of coverage. Studies have shown that news stories about candidates who are running political ads are more likely to be positive than those about candidates who are not running ads.

This bias is likely due to the fact that local television stations are dependent on political advertising revenue. If they offend a candidate by running negative stories, they risk losing that candidate's advertising dollars. As a result, local television stations are more likely to provide favorable coverage of candidates who are spending money on advertising.

## **The Impact of Political Advertising on Civic Engagement**

The biased coverage of political candidates on local television news can have a negative impact on civic engagement. Studies have shown that citizens who watch local television news are less likely to be informed about the candidates and their positions, and are less likely to vote.

This is because the biased coverage can lead citizens to believe that the candidates are all the same, or that they are not qualified for office. As a result, citizens are less likely to engage in the political process.

## **Reforming Political Advertising**

There are a number of things that can be done to reform political advertising and reduce its negative impact on civic engagement. One reform is to limit the amount of money that candidates can spend on advertising. This would reduce the influence of money in politics and help to level the playing field for all candidates.

Another reform is to require television stations to provide equal airtime to all candidates, regardless of their spending. This would ensure that all candidates have a fair chance to reach voters with their message.

Finally, it is important to increase the amount of nonpartisan information about candidates and elections that is available to voters. This information can help voters to make informed decisions about who to vote for, and can reduce the impact of biased media coverage.

Political advertising is a major part of the electoral process in the United States. While it can be a useful way to inform voters about the candidates and their positions, it can also have a negative impact on civic engagement. The biased coverage of political candidates on local television news can lead citizens to be less informed about the candidates and less likely to vote.

There are a number of reforms that can be made to political advertising to reduce its negative impact on civic engagement. These reforms include limiting the amount of money that candidates can spend on advertising, requiring television stations to provide equal airtime to all candidates, and increasing the amount of nonpartisan information about candidates and elections that is available to voters.

By reforming political advertising, we can help to strengthen our democracy and ensure that all voices are heard.

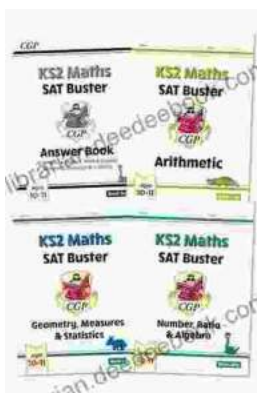


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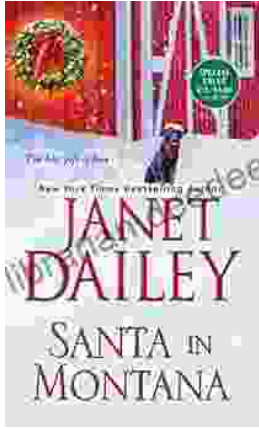
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