

Overview: Fairness in Media

U.S. adults have a clear view of the role of local TV broadcasters. Overwhelmingly they feel it is very important for local TV broadcasters to discuss local issues and cover local news and events, 70% and 81%, respectively. Yet when asked how well local TV broadcasters do in serving the needs of the community only 13%, thought they did a very good job.

The public feels that local TV broadcasters have a responsibility to act in the public's interest, a position that 90 percent completely or somewhat agree with. This sense of the responsibilities of local TV broadcasters is reflected in their position that equal time should be provided to candidates, a position that 92% of adults agree with completely or somewhat agree. Similarly, when asked if they thought it would be appropriate for a local TV broadcaster to air a program that was critical of a candidate without providing that candidate an opportunity to respond, 70% felt it would be inappropriate.

Awareness of plans for some local TV broadcasters to air "Stolen Honor: Wounds that Never Heal" was 41% nationally and 45% among Sinclair's markets. Among adults in Sinclair's markets, awareness was highest among – men (56%), college graduates (53%), those 55 or older (58%) and adults with household income of \$50,000 or more (51%).

Among those aware of select local broadcasters' plans of airing "Stolen Honor: Wounds that Never Heal", support for the airing of this piece was split -- 51% support the local broadcaster's decision, but a substantial plurality, 41% did not support this decision and 9% did not voice an opinion. Opposition to airing this program was greatest among – women (46%), and those 44 or younger (42%). However, most (78%) felt that if local TV broadcasters air "Stolen Honor: Wounds that Never Heal" they should also air the opposing point of view. Even among those aware of and supporting the broadcast of "Stolen Honor: Wounds that Never Heal", 69% felt it should be balanced by the opposing point of view.

Background

On the evening of October 19th, through the morning of October 20th, 4,528 interviews were completed among adults 18+ years of age examining their perceptions of local TV broadcasters generally, and plans of some local broadcaster to air "Stolen Honor: Wounds that Never Heal." 2,553 interviews were completed across markets where Sinclair Broadcast has one or more stations and 1,706 interviews were completed in the balance of the nation excluding Sinclair's markets. The sample was balanced to reflect Sinclair markets in the proper relation to the nation. Interviews were completed before or shortly after the announcement to change the focus of the program. All interviews were completed online among a random sample of adults with web access provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC. The margin of error for this study is +/- 2 percentage points.