



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on November 6, 2010

MSNBC Suspends Olbermann For Being Biased?!

This story sounds like something straight out of the satirical newspaper, The Onion. But it's not. MSNBC indefinitely suspended Countdown host Keith Olbermann November 5 because the leftist television host had donated \$2,400 to each of three Democratic congressional candidates, including Kentucky Senator Rand Paul's opponent Jack Conway. MSNBC officially maintains a policy that bans political donations by staff on-air personalities.



MSNBC President Phil Griffin released a [statement](#) November 5 claiming: I became aware of Keith's political contributions late last night. Mindful of NBC News policy and standards, I have suspended him indefinitely without pay."

This brings about an obvious question: Who in the world does Phil Griffin think he's kidding? Does anyone at least anyone who has seen *Countdown* actually believe that Olbermann religiously practiced a monastic-style journalistic neutrality? And does Griffin think that those three political contributions somehow stains Olbermann's supposed reputation for journalistic even-handedness?

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MSNBC's claims of strict journalistic neutrality ring about as hollow as claims of massive cheese stock in Monty Python's [Cheese Shop skit](#). Everyone knows that MSNBC has sought out the most left-wing hosts that they could find, from Rachel Maddow to Chris Matthews to Ed Shultz.

MSNBC indefinitely suspending Olbermann for being a political leftist is like the New England Patriots indefinitely suspending Tom Brady for throwing too many touchdown passes. Like just everybody else in the country, this writer thought Olbermann's far-left bias was precisely the reason why MSNBC hired him. After all, MSNBC propagandizes on behalf of the far left every bit as much as FOX News pushes neoconservatism.

But Olbermann is not merely a leftist propagandist, he is also a hypocrite. He ridiculed Fox News executive Rupert Murdoch for donating several million dollars to the Republican candidates of his choice, [asking](#): What is the Democratic strategy, the political strategy for dealing with a media outlet that has now put its money where everybody has known its mouth has always been? Olbermann even went so far as to [suggest](#) that Congress should *enact a law* banning journalists from making political donations: Is there a legislative response to the idea that there is a national cable news outlet that goes beyond having a point of view and actually starts to shill for partisan causes and actually starts to donate to partisan groups of one party?

Yeah, and now Olbermann has "put [his] money where everybody has known [his] mouth has always been." Olbermann's hypocrisy and his penchant for government censorship of the media have definitely



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made him a contender for his own [worst person in the world award](#).

The regurgitation of those Olbermann quotes by [Politico](#) makes this writer suspect that the *Countdown* host was put on waivers to minimize embarrassment to the corporate chiefs. The mainstream media may have lost their moral compass, if they ever had any, but they still can't stand being publicly ridiculed about their blatant hypocrisy. Or maybe it was Olbermann's [persistently lackluster Nielsen Ratings](#) that prompted MSNBC honchos to find an excuse to pull the pin on his show. Olbermann was a well-paid host who didn't exactly bring home the bacon. He was, economically speaking, a fixed cost that produced [diminishing marginal returns](#).

But regardless of the real reason why Olbermann was indefinitely suspended (it could not have been his liberal bias), there is no doubt that MSNBC will continue being biased, despite its pretense of political neutrality. In fact, MSNBC could not eliminate bias from its reporting, even if it wanted to do so. (It could, of course, be honest about its bias.) Every writer writes with a bias, and anyone who says otherwise is being dishonest, if not to others, at least to himself. Any story includes information that is placed at the top of the story, different information buried in the middle of the article, and other information that is left out. Only the biases of the author and his editor decide what makes the cut.

I've pointed above to the leftist bias of MSNBC and neoconservative bias of Fox News. But CNN, ABC, and CBS also have their own biases. They're political moderates in the sense that the late Joseph Sobran once brilliantly [outlined](#):

If you want government to intervene domestically, you're a liberal. If you want government to intervene overseas, you're a conservative. If you want government to intervene everywhere, you're a moderate. If you don't want government to intervene anywhere, you're an extremist.

This explains why moderate cable outlets like [CNN have recently focused on how the Tea Party's defeat of moderate Republicans is supposedly why the Republicans don't control the Senate](#). The accusation is actually funny, in the sense that CNN gives the Tea Party magical powers. How exactly could the Tea Party be responsible for the GOP losing the U.S. Senate, considering that the GOP lost the Senate in 2006, before the Tea Party existed? Of course, CNN pundits never explain why moderate GOP candidates would have been so successful in 2010 after running virtually the whole GOP candidate slate in 2006 and 2008 and failing so miserably both times.

So does it make any sense to suspend or fire biased journalists who work at biased media organs for donating their personal money to political campaigns? Of course not. Does it make sense to fire Olbermann for that reason? No again. However, just as employees have a right to quit, employers should have a right to fire so long as any such actions do not violate the voluntarily agreed-upon conditions of the employment. Of course, if this writer, who readily acknowledges his own bias, were making corporate decisions for MSNBC, more than Olbermann would be sent packing and they would be replaced by commentators displaying a bias on behalf of minimal government, noninterventionism in foreign affairs, and the U.S. Constitution. And they certainly would not be fired for giving their own money to the political campaigns of their choice.

Regarding Olbermann in particular, I have six words for him:

[Sportscenter is calling you back](#), sir.

Full disclosure: *The author of this article donated \$35 to the Rand Paul for U.S. Senate Committee in the last election cycle, and sincerely believes that his \$35 mattered more than Olbermann's \$2,400 donation to Rand Paul's opponent, Jack Conway. In fact, his \$35 cost more than Olbermann's \$2,400.*



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The author just as sincerely hopes The New American will not fire him for exercising his right to heap his massive largesse upon the candidate of his choice.

Photo of Keith Olbermann: AP Images



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