



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on March 10, 2011

NPR CEO Forced Out; Funding In Danger

Though National Public Radio's CEO Vivian Schiller technically resigned from the leftist network after video recordings surfaced of another NPR executive calling Tea Party members racists, she did so under pressure from NPR's board of directors. In other words, it was resign or be fired.



The Associated Press reports that the board of directors pushed Schiller out the door, and not just because her subordinate, Ron Schiller (no relation), NPR's foundation president and vice president for development, vilified a major political movement. Vivian Schiller was still in hot water [for cashiering](#) liberal Juan Williams, [who told](#) Fox News talker Bill O'Reilly that Muslims on airplanes make him nervous.

Indeed, Vivian Schiller's handling of the Williams matter was another reason she was forced out. She is not in the video, posted Tuesday by conservative activist James O'Keefe and his [Project Veritas](#), but she told the Associated Press that staying on would hurt NPR's fight for federal money.

"We took a reputational hit around the Juan Williams incident, and this was another blow to NPR's reputation. There's no question," she admitted.

It appears as if federal funding for the [Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#), NPR's parent, is in serious jeopardy for the first time.

Tea Party Members Are Bigots

The last days of Vivian Schiller's tenure with NPR began on February 22, when O'Keefe, the conservative muckracker, set up a luncheon between Ron Schiller and Betsy Liley, NPR's director of institutional giving, and two representatives of a phony Muslim organization called the [Muslim Education Action Trust](#). Project Veritas created MEAC with an affiliated [bogus website that advocates](#) worldwide Sharia law.

The two representatives, identifying themselves as Ibrahim Kassam and Amir Malik, [flatly told](#) the pair of news executives that MEAC [was founded](#) by a member of the [Muslim Brotherhood](#), a jihadist group that seeks global Islamic hegemony and is connected to Muslim terrorists.

The faux Muslims ate lunch with Ron Schiller and Liley, [telling them](#) they would donate \$5 million to NPR because they liked its coverage of the Middle East. But Kassam and Malik also prodded Schiller and Liley to utter some profoundly stupid remarks about members of the Tea Party.

Said Ron Schiller:

The current Republican Party, particularly the Tea Party, is fanatically involved in people's personal lives and very fundamental Christian — I wouldn't even call it Christian. It's this weird



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evangelical kind of move. ...

[The Tea Party is not] just Islamophobic, but really xenophobic, I mean basically they are, they believe in sort of white, middle-America gun-toting. I mean, it's scary. They're seriously racist, racist people.

Schiller also called conservatives "anti-intellectual."

Liley didn't help NPR's reputation either. After Malik complained that the Muslim Brotherhood is "demonized and looked down on as horrible, terrible people," [Liley elaborated](#) on her view of the American past: "Sadly, our history from the record ... shows that we have done this before. We put Japanese-Americans in camps in World War II."

Then, when Kassam joked that NPR so favorably presents the Palestinian point of view that Muslims call it "National Palestinian Radio," Schiller laughed. Said Liley: "Oh really? That's good. I like that."

Schiller [also told](#) the pair that NPR did not need federal funding and would be better off without it.

NPR Aghast

The recording of Ron Schiller and Liley went viral on the web just a day after Vivian Schiller held a press conference at the National Press Club, where she explained that NPR did not have a liberal bias and that federal funding was crucial to the survival of NPR's news operation.

As [she told](#) the *New York Times* after the video went viral, "eliminating federal funding would profoundly damage public broadcasting as a whole. It is impossible to separate NPR and the stations; we are one and the same."

NPR said it was "appalled" over Ron Schiller's remarks. Its ombudsman, Alicia Shepard, called his assertions profoundly offensive to conservatives at her blog, particularly because Schiller characterized conservatives as "anti-intellectual." [Commented Shepard](#):

Schiller comes across as an effete, well-educated, liberal intellectual — just exactly the stereotype that critics long have used against NPR and other bastions of the news media. It's also a stereotype that NPR journalists try hard to combat every day in their newsgathering.

Yet Ron Schiller's remarks also touched upon the firing of Juan Williams for his comments about Muslims. Schiller said he was proud that NPR fired Williams, who had been with the organization for 10 years. He told the two faux Muslims:

[A]nd the question that we asked internally was can Juan Williams, when he makes a statement like he made, can he report to the Muslim population, for example, and be believed and the answer is no. He lost all credibility.

Vivian Schiller admitted she mishandled the Williams matter at the press conference on Monday. That mistake included permitting another NPR executive to fire the veteran analyst over the phone. After the firing, [Schiller told](#) a gathering at the Atlanta Press Club on October 21, 2010 that Williams should have kept his feelings about Muslims "between him and his psychiatrist or his publicist," a remark for which [she later apologized](#).

Vivian Schiller resigned after Ron Schiller also resigned. Ron Schiller was supposed to join [the Aspen Institute](#), a liberal think-tank, but decided not to take the job, [The Daily Caller reports](#). "In light of the controversy surrounding his recent statement," the institute said, "he does not feel it's in the best interests of The Aspen Institute to come to work here."



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The DC [also reported](#) that the institute erased a press release about Schiller from its website.

Funding For Public Broadcasting In Jeopardy

All these contretemps have endangered taxpayer subsidies for NPR and its parent, CPB.

[According to](#) the AP, CPB's budget this year is \$430 million. Next year, it will received \$445 million.

It handed out nearly \$94 million in grants to more than 400 public radio stations — not all of which are NPR affiliates — in fiscal 2010.

NPR itself typically gets only about 2 percent of its budget from CPB grants, but many of its 268 member stations rely heavily on them. NPR affiliates get an average of 10 percent of their funding from CPB, and some small and rural stations receive more than 40 percent of their funding that way, although NPR could not provide exact figures.

About a third of NPR's \$161 million budget in fiscal 2010 came from its affiliates in the form of programming fees.

But Congress is ready to cut off its funding. The U.S. House of Representatives voted to end funding for CPB last month.

Sen. [Jim DeMint](#) (R-S.C.) introduced legislation to end funding last week. Since 2001, DeMint noted, CPB has received \$4 billion in taxpayer subsidies.

A spokesman for DeMint [told the AP](#), "I don't expect the vote to be the same as it has [been] in the past."

Related articles:

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Photo: In this March 24, 2009 file photo, President and CEO of NPR Vivian Schiller appears on The Kalb Report at the National Press Club in Washington: AP Images



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