

# Liberal Caucus Fishbowl Report Out

4/3/2023

# Liberal Caucus

## *Experiences and Values*

### Common to the Caucus (Summary)

Many of the liberal team are **free thinkers**

Greatest good for the greatest number

Golden Rule

Skepticism about our consumer society – whoever has the most money wins.

We value education and the development, emphasis on, and the importance of critical thinking

# Backgrounder on Vision and Outcomes

## Definitions of misinformation and disinformation

- Misinformation is simply bad/wrong/mistaken information
- Disinformation is intentionally bad/wrong/mistaken

## Background

- **The US Constitution Amendment 1 prohibits the government from interfering with the freedom of the press.**
  - State or federally imposed neutrality would infringe on First Amendment media and corporate rights. This applies to government regulation, not private regulation.
- **There are already some legal limits,**
  - primarily around libel, slander, violating the Anti-terrorism Act (ATA) and Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (ASTA), and inciting violence or harm to others, and theft/scamming/blackmail.
- **Up to the media to self-police**
  - In most cases, however, it's nearly an impossible task.
  - 500 hours of video are uploaded every minute and 350,000 tweets every minute.
  - The moderation of this flood falls to media and company developed **algorithms.**
- **Algorithms are designed and refined to maximize time spent on the site,**
  - ultimately, maximizing income.
  - Whether by accident or intentionally these algorithms tend to amplify right wing voices according to an NYU Study.  
[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b6df958f8370af3217d4178/t/613a4d4cc86b9d3810eb35aa/1631210832122/NYU+CBHR+Fueling+The+Fire\\_FINAL+ONLINE+REVISED+Sep7.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b6df958f8370af3217d4178/t/613a4d4cc86b9d3810eb35aa/1631210832122/NYU+CBHR+Fueling+The+Fire_FINAL+ONLINE+REVISED+Sep7.pdf)

# Liberal Caucus

## *Vision and Outcomes*

### Common to the Caucus (Summary)

An educated population who can get information from a wide range of sources so that we can draw our own conclusions and challenge authority when needed.

An educated population who can communicate with common facts to problem solve and compromise with each other, within families, communities and the country.

Ability to easily fact check so that the population can discern the difference between the information, misinformation and disinformation.

Trust that our elected representatives are being truthful and honest with us.

Our media institutions and corporations are truthful and fair and honest with us.

Defined guardrails that can hold disinformation bad actors accountable.

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## *Suggested Paths & Actions – Part 1*

### Common to the Caucus (Ideas)

- Companies and sites tend to moderate content that might frighten advertisers and/or turn away eyeballs. To paraphrase TSA, if you see something, say something—report dis/mis information to the company.
- Contact advertisers who appear where dis/misinformation is presented—the Investor Relations department is a good place to start.
- Lean away from purchasing from companies that advertise on sites/channels that foment mis/disinformation.
- Push for greater disclosure of existing content moderation regulations.
- Push for companies to disclose their dis/misinformation moderation policies.
- Suggest companies offer users a choice of algorithms—existing algorithm, one that screens out more diverse views, one that includes more diverse views. Encourage more human moderation.
- When you are asked to accept cookies on a website, don't automatically agree, check the cookie policy and tailor to your preferences. Regularly clear your browsing history. Read the website's privacy policy.
- The Federal Communications Commission is limited to reviewing and renewing traditional media licenses to once every eight years. Encourage your congressional representatives to reduce this oversight to three to five years. Also push them to pass legislation that enables the FCC to bring suits and fine egregious violators
- The prosecutors of former President Trump may need to issue gag orders to increase the probability of fair trials. ; )
- More broadly, push for repeal of Citizens United and/or increase transparency of large political donations; vote for candidates who support ethical standards of honesty and truth; suggest people seek out different viewpoints; invest ethically according to your values in funds/companies that support ESG and CSR principles

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## *Suggested Paths & Actions - 2*

### Common to the Caucus (Summary)

**Repeal Citizens United** - Treating corporations as people **Results** - corporations influence government with unlimited amounts of money under the guise of free speech.

#### **Controlling social media**

- Take control of who sees what
- Take control of the algorithms that regulate what you see.

#### **Insist on ethics**

- Journalistic Ethics (see next page)

**Resisting the dictates of a consumer society** - By dismantling consumer culture that funds billionaires, we will build a more equitable society.

- Modern ads turn wants into needs.
- Consumer culture admires greed and excess aspiring to a selfish lifestyle.
- Instability due to the increasing wealth gap.

**However, there are problems with this path** - its fraught with paradoxes. For example:

- We want solar, and at the same time, we don't want lithium mines despoiling someone else back yard. **Three tribes file new lawsuit challenging Thacker Pass lithium mine** Nevada Current, February 21, 2023
- We want to consume less, go off the grid, and at the same time, don't want to do it alone and without compensation for workers out of a job — like Walmart's 2.1 million associates worldwide. (Walmart 2023)
- We want to support unions and, at the same time, are turned off by their long history of excluding people of color (Cato Institute Journal "Unions and Discrimination 2010)

### **Conclusion**

*The challenges of dark money fueling multiple social and environmental issues feel daunting, and at the same time, progressive groups such as The Rocking Chair Rebellion recognize the urgency of dismantling this destructive, consumer-driven system and organizing one that is rooted in cooperation and mutual aid in the manner of the New Deal (1933-1939)*

# Journalistic Ethics (addendum)

## Journalistic Ethics

- *Seek Truth and Report It.* This includes fact-checking, not intentionally distorting information, identifying sources, avoiding stereotypes, and supporting the open exchange of opinions.
- *Minimize Harm.* This includes demonstrating compassion for sources and subjects of stories and protecting the privacy of individuals.
- *Act Independently.* This includes avoiding conflicts of interest and corruption, and resisting the attempts of advertisers and special interests groups to influence the news.
- *Be Accountable.* This includes correcting mistakes, inviting criticism, and exposing unethical practices of the media. (from cs.stanford.edu)

## The [Al-Jazeera](#) Code of Ethics, Being a globally oriented media service, Al-Jazeera shall determinedly adopt the following code of ethics in pursuance of the vision and mission it has set for itself:

- Adhere to the journalistic values of honesty, courage, fairness, balance, independence, credibility and diversity, giving no priority to commercial or political considerations over professional ones.
- Endeavor to get to the truth and declare it in our dispatches, programmes and news bulletins unequivocally in a manner which leaves no doubt about its validity and accuracy.
- Treat our audiences with due respect and address every issue or story with due attention to present a clear, factual and accurate picture while giving full consideration to the feelings of victims of crime, war, persecution and disaster, their relatives and our viewers, and to individual privacy and public decorum.
- Welcome fair and honest media competition without allowing it to affect adversely our standards of performance so that getting a “scoop” will not become an end in itself.
- Present diverse points of view and opinions without bias or partiality.
- Recognise diversity in human societies with all their races, cultures and beliefs and their values and intrinsic individualities in order to present unbiased and faithful reflection of them.
- Acknowledge a mistake when it occurs, promptly correct it and ensure it does not recur.
- Observe transparency in dealing with news and news sources while adhering to internationally established practices concerning the rights of these sources.
- Distinguish between news material, opinion and analysis to avoid the pitfalls of speculation and propaganda.
- Stand by colleagues in the profession and offer them support when required, particularly in light of the acts of aggression and harassment to which journalists are subjected at times. Cooperate with Arab and international journalistic unions and associations to defend freedom of the press.