Media Spin Is Covering Up The Facts

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Media spin is disguising and distorting the facts that Americans need to know. Let's puncture some of the spin.

Spin: The Republicans lost the 1998 Congressional elections. Fact: The Republicans won the 1998 Congressional elections by electing a majority in both Houses of Congress for the third straight time, the first time this has happened in our lifetime.

In the 435 House races, 500,000 more people voted for Republican candidates than for Democratic candidates. In the gubernatorial races, 4.5 million more people voted for Republicans than for Democrats, keeping the majority of Governors' mansions in Republican hands.

Spin: The 1998 elections were a victory for "moderate," "centrist" candidates. It was "the year of the moderate" as candidates "rushed to the center." Fact: The spectacular Senate winners were pro-life conservatives Peter Fitzgerald (R-IL), Jim Bunning (R-KY) and Mike Crapo (R-ID), plus pro-abortion liberals Charles Schumer (D-NY), Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Patty Murray (D-WA), all ideological partisans, not a "moderate" among them.

When Peter Fitzgerald won the Illinois Republican primary in March, defeating "moderate" pro-abortion Loleta Didrickson who had been anointed by the Party establishment and Bob Dole, the liberal media shed copious crocodile tears that the Republicans had kicked away their best chance to defeat Carol Moseley-Braun. Typical of the reaction of all the pundits was William Schneider's comment that Didrickson was "the perfect candidate, a moderate woman who supports gun control and abortion rights." The voters disagreed.

Spin: Republican adherence to the pro-life cause is a loser. Fact: Smart Democrats are starting to run pro-life candidates because they know it is a winner.

Three new Democratic Congressmen ran as pro-life conservatives: Ken Lucas in Kentucky, Ronnie Shows in Mississippi, and David Phelps in Illinois. Other pro-life Democrats came close to winning by running more pro-life than their pro-life Republican opponents: Marjorie McKeithen in Louisiana (who almost unseated Rep. Richard Baker) and Glenn Poshard (who ran a tight race for Governor of Illinois against George Ryan).

Ken Lucas's campaign material, mailed out by the Kentucky Democratic Party, described him as "a pro-life, pro-family Christian. . . . No matter how small -- no matter what stage of life -- Ken will fight to make sure life is respected and our children -- born and unborn -- are protected."

Spin: The Democratic gains in the House are a gain for the liberals. Fact: The Democratic Leadership Council claims that more than half of the 23 newly elected Democrats are DLC's "New Democrats" who want to move their Party's ideology away from liberalism, and some of them ran on agendas that are pro-business, fiscally responsible, anti-abortion, and pro-school prayer.

Spin: The gender gap bodes a bleak future for Republicans because women vote for liberal, pro-abortion Democrats. Fact: The gender differential depends on variables other than ideology.

In Illinois, Peter Fitzgerald got 57 percent of the women's vote over Carol Moseley-Braun; in Texas, Governor George W. Bush got 75 percent of the women's vote. Women employed outside the home voted 55-42 percent Democratic, while women who are not employed outside the home voted 52-42 percent Republican.

Spin: Clinton's harangues about Social Security were a big reason why Republicans lost seats in Congress. Fact: Voters age 60 and over weren't fooled; they voted 55-45 percent for Republican candidates.

However, the middle-age voters (aged 45 to 59, who are paying high Social Security taxes and worrying they will never get back what they pay in) voted Democratic, 52-48 percent. That should send a message to Republicans because this age group had previously voted 53-47 percent for Republicans.

Spin: After the election, the Republicans sank into "chaos" and engaged in "bloodletting" in their contest for new leaders. Fact: Newt Gingrich's prompt and graceful exit paved the way for the orderly and

harmonious election of new leaders, including the unanimous election of the new Speaker.

Spin: The 1998 elections prove that the people want Congress to abandon its plans for impeachment. Fact: Clinton was not on the ballot, and there is no evidence that his behavior was the reason why any Republican or Democratic candidate was elected or defeated.

Spin: Impeachment is too drastic a punishment for Clinton's admittedly shameful behavior. Fact: Impeachment is exactly the proper and constitutional remedy because impeachment is merely a formal resolution by the House that Clinton's behavior is unacceptable (which it is).

Impeachment doesn't convict him, doesn't remove him from office, and doesn't send him to jail. After impeachment, it becomes the Senate's task to decide whether removal from office is the punishment that fits the crime.

The clearest message of the recent election is that Republicans must stand for something in order to win. Any ambivalence by Republicans about impeaching a President who has obstructed justice will only cause a repeat of the disappointments of the last election.