



ultraviolet

February 11, 2022

To News Division Heads, Editors in Chief, Bureau Chiefs, Political Directors, Editors, Producers, Reporters, and Anchors:

The media plays a critical role in how women candidates and elected leaders are perceived by voters and the public. Headlines, photos, social media previews, and article content can be used to spread racist and sexist ideas and encourage or legitimize disinformation. Reporting on events “as they occur” without dissecting entrenched sexism, racism, and misogyny perpetuates hate and deepens belief in harmful stereotypes. This pattern decreases public confidence in diverse candidates and discourages women from entering politics or seeking positions of leadership and power in our democracy. The media must do better, and it is the responsibility of newsrooms, headline writers, journalists, marketers, and editors to get this right.

Despite a recent increase in the number of political leaders who are women and/or people of color, there’s still a long way to go until our nation’s officials truly represent our population. Over more than 200 years of the Supreme Court’s existence, there have been only five women justices (three of whom are serving now), one Latina justice, and two Black justices—both men. We have never had a Black woman nominated to the highest court in the land..

The media, including print, radio, digital, television, and podcasts, is culpable in shaping our society not only to have poor representation across race and gender, but to accept this lack of representation as a fact of life. By focusing on a woman candidate’s makeup, a Black woman politician’s hairstyle, a woman of color candidate’s likeability, or an immigrant politician’s loyalties, the media perpetuates dangerous stereotypes and actively dissuades women, especially women of color and Black women, from entering the public sphere.

This week, UltraViolet, with endorsements from 60 organizations, has rereleased our *Reporting in an Era of Disinformation: Fairness Guide for Covering Women and People of Color in Politics* to specifically focus on this critical moment in history as President Biden fulfills his campaign promise to nominate a Black woman to the Supreme Court.

This updated guide makes specific recommendations designed to help journalists and platforms identify and avoid unintentional sexist and racist bias and disinformation when interviewing, writing, or moderating content about the candidates who will be considered for the role, and the eventual nominee as she goes before the Senate Judiciary Committee and ultimately joins the highest court in the land.

Our coalition of gender and racial justice organizations is calling on you, the media, to step up and cover this historic moment in our nation with attention to the impact that bias in your coverage has on shaping the perception of the nominee. It's time the media does better in covering women and people of color, specifically women of color and Black women. We call on you to use our guide as a tool to understand best practices and tropes to avoid as President Biden and the Senate nominate and confirm the first Black woman justice to the Supreme Court. The country, and women, are watching.

Signed,

UltraViolet

#ShePersisted

#VOTEPROCHOICE

#WinWithBlackWomen

A/B Partners

Advocates for Youth

AI for the People Inc.

Asian and Pacific American Islander Vote (APIAVote)

Asset Building Strategies

Black Women's Roundtable, NCBCP

Build A Movement 2022

Care2

Catholics for Choice

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Daily Kos

DemCast USA

Earthseed

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)

ERA Coalition

Esperanza United (Formerly Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network)

Faithful America

Feminist Majority Foundation

Free Press

Friends of the Earth

Froward for Progress

Froward for Progress

Global Project Against Hate and Extremism

Guns Down America

Higher Heights For America

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

Indivisible

Indivisible Northern Nevada

Japanese American Citizens League

Jewish Women International (JWI)

Justice for Migrant Women

Kairos

Lake Oconee Community Church

Louisiana Coalition for Reproductive Freedom

Make the Road Nevada
Media Matters for America
MediaJustice
MomsRising
Muslim Advocates
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Black Justice Coalition
National Council of Negro Women
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center Action Fund
New Currents Collective
NextGen America
Ohio NOW
Oregoizers
Peninsula 360 Press
People's Parity Project
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Power Rising
Pro-Choice North Carolina
Pro-Choice Oregon
ProgressNow New Mexico
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Reproaction
Revolving Door Project
She Will Rise
SHK Global Health
Sisters Lead Sisters Vote
SisterSong: Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
SumOfUs
Supermajority
Take Back the Court
The League
The Sparrow Project
The Womxn Project
United State of Women
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Western States Center
Women Lawyers On Guard Action Network, Inc.
Women's March