

WASHINGTON -- On Thursday, Free Press released *Citizens Inundated*, a report examining how the nation's largest broadcasters are profiting from a massive increase in political-ad spending while at the same time cutting back on their news coverage of elections. The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) charged the study with "intellectual dishonesty," an unsubstantiated accusation.

**Timothy Karr**, senior director of strategy at Free Press, issued the following response to the NAB:

"It's no surprise that the National Association Broadcasters is trying to distract from the fact that broadcasters are doing virtually nothing to improve election-year coverage while raking in billions from political ads. The NAB's spokesman is understandably defensive about the industry's record, but sniping at Free Press won't change the facts.

"Evidence shows that TV stations will bring in billions in political advertising revenue in 2012, but those profits are not reinvested in actual reporting about elections. Research shows that during the typical local TV newscast, stations devote more than twice as much time to partisan political ads than to objective reporting about local elections. Airing candidate debates and the State of the Union is well and good, but it is not the same thing as actually doing journalism.

"The NAB's accusation of 'intellectual dishonesty' is laughable coming from an organization that once told the FCC that it shouldn't include broadcaster revenues earned in election years in its analysis of the industry's financial health. We trust the conclusions of respected, independent academic researchers more than the claims of industry spin doctors.

"The NAB has demonstrated time and again that is unwilling to take even the most modest steps to help viewers cut through the spin and noise its station unleash during elections. The NAB's refusal to be more transparent about political ad spending — most recently by fiercely resisting even the simple request to put stations' 'political files' online — strongly suggests that this corporate lobby has forgotten broadcasters' responsibility to serve their viewers in exchange for free use of the public airwaves."