REPORTING COMPLEX LEGAL ISSUES: AN EXAMINATION OF THE REPORTAGE ON CITIZENS UNITED AND ACA

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ABSTRACT

This study looked at the reportage of Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission and National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius from the New York Times, the USA Today and The Washington Post. Through the analysis of the sample, more than 80 articles in total, the researcher found that each of the news outlets from the sample provided adequate coverage of the decisions and the prior litigation leading to those decisions. The study concluded that research into accuracy with respect to this sort of reportage should look at the accuracy of the sample cumulatively, and also with consideration for the difficult and confusing nature of Supreme Court jurisprudence.

This paper also found conflict to be a major theme of the coverage of at least Sebelius and recommended that future research investigate the ways in which court decisions are used tangentially in reference to other cases. This study also recommended that future researchers expand their analysis with a third case or fourth news outlet.