

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 29, 2024

Ms. Katherine Maher
Chief Executive Officer
National Public Radio
1111 North Capitol Street NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Ms. Maher,

Upon assuming your role at the helm of National Public Radio (NPR), you inherited not just the mantle of leadership but also the duty of rectifying the organization's tarnished reputation. Recent public reports have revealed a biased culture and slanted coverage at NPR's headquarters, which is a profound disservice to the journalistic integrity expected of NPR and your local affiliates whose excellent reputation is tarnished by association.

We have deep concerns regarding the editorial direction under NPR's national leadership, which have been brought starkly to light in the article, "I've Been at NPR for 25 Years. Here's How We Lost America's Trust" by Uri Berliner. This piece highlights a troubling deviation from NPR's supposed mission of providing unbiased and reliable journalism.

NPR's local affiliates continue to serve their communities with dedication and professionalism, providing an invaluable service for rural and remote areas nationwide, where local public radio often serves as the primary, if not sole, source of news. It is disappointing to see their dedication to straightforward programming be besmirched by affiliation.

National leadership has allowed and cultivated an environment where ideological bias not only creeps in but takes center stage. As outlined by Mr. Berliner, NPR headquarters has increasingly pursued a narrative-driven approach rather than evidence-based journalism, particularly he highlighted NPR's coverage of significant issues such as the Hunter Biden laptop story, the COVID-19 lab leak theory, and the Trump-Russia collusion narrative.

The revelation of an internal culture shift towards a homogenized, decidedly left-leaning editorial stance threatens – or has squelched – the integrity and diversity of thought. As Mr. Berliner pointedly illustrates, the absence of political and ideological diversity within the national newsroom — where registered Democrats overwhelmingly outnumber everyone else — is not just disappointing; it is an ethical failure.

It is not NPR's job to tell Americans what to think but to inform them with unbiased facts. Moreover, the internal cultural shifts and management decisions to prioritize ideological narratives do not just undermine your organization's integrity; they have also alienated a significant portion of your audience. As Mr. Berliner points out, this has had tangible effects on NPR's trust ratings and listener demographics, which have skewed increasingly away from any semblance of a broad, inclusive audience.

If NPR's goal was to become an echo chamber, mission accomplished. But as a publicly funded entity, you are responsible for providing impartial coverage that accurately informs all Americans, regardless of political affiliation. This objective is decidedly difficult when nearly 100 percent of employees in Washington, DC congregate on one side of the political aisle.

We urge you to start a course correction to address these issues. If NPR does not want to devolve into a one-sided opinion outlet, it should take a page from its local affiliates and embrace a culture of intellectual diversity and focus on balanced reporting.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

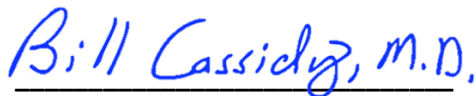
Sincerely,



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



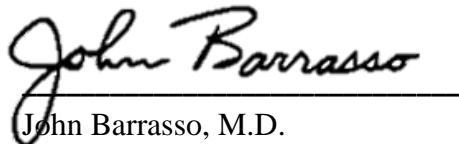
Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



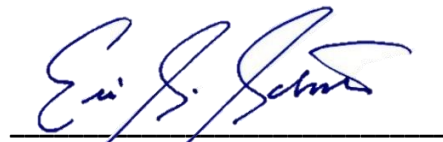
Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator



Eric S. Schmitt
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator