



Robert Weiner



Ingrid Lang

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[What has Trump accomplished with his media dominance? Will it end?](#)

By [Robert Weiner](#) and [Ingrid Lang](#)

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The short answer is that Donald Trump has always thrived on attention, and he continues to dominate it. [A 2017 report](#) from Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center found that Trump consumed 41 percent of all news coverage in his first 100 days, three times more than previous presidents. That pattern hasn't faded. [A 2025 Media Research Center study](#) of NBC, ABC, and CBS evening newscasts found Trump received 1,716 minutes of airtime between January 20 and April 9. President Biden received 726 minutes during the same period in 2021. Trump's grip on the media remains unmatched. But to what end? The media dominance has distracted from accountability, framed political violence on Trump-Vance MAGA's term, and allowed policy decisions to unfold in the shadows. Events raise the question of whether Trump's media dominance is threatening free speech itself. It might be pushing the United States closer to where free speech becomes conditional and power dictates what voices are heard.

Trump's entire political career has been built on omnipresence. Steve Bannon [described](#) the approach in 2018, saying that The real opposition is the media. And the way to deal with them is to flood the zone. By overwhelming journalists with a constant stream of statements, scandals, and provocations, Trump ensures that no single controversy sticks. New York University professor and media critic Jay Rosen has [argued](#) that the press has allowed Trump to become the center of gravity, the sun around which the media universe orbits. When he speaks, he dominates. When he is silent, the vacuum is filled with speculation.

At Kirk's memorial service, Trump turned what could have been a tribute into a campaign-style speech. He lashed out at Democrats, saying, he differed with Kirk, who urged conversation and discussion. At the solemn ceremony Trump said, "I differ with Charlie: *I hate my opponent, and I don't want the best for them.* Trump used the stage to push a partisan message and frame Kirk's death in terms that suited his politics.

Another chilling illustration of what Trump's media dominance can enable came with the suspension of *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* by ABC. The network pulled the show after Kimmel criticized conservatives' reaction to the assassination of Charlie Kirk. For nearly a week, he was off the air. Free speech activists and actors pushed for Disney's to make ABC bring him back. This incident occurred during Trump's U.K. state visit. [Trump praised George Orwell](#) for his themes of magnifying state control while blocking free speech. Critics suggest that applauding Orwell in that context is itself Orwellian, a term used to describe government overreach, censorship, and the erosion of free speech. This might be signaling support for a narrative where free speech is conditional, and where political power can reshape what broadcasters are allowed to say.

The same dynamic applies to policy. An example of Trump's media dominance is his recent move to gut cancer research funding. In his proposed budget for the next fiscal year, Trump has called for [more than a 37% cut](#) to the National Cancer Institute. This decision threatens to dismantle a scientific system that took 50 years to build and has saved millions of lives. As [Rachel Maddow](#) emphasized on her show September 15th, America's 80-year run as the world leader in biomedical research and its 50-year leadership in cancer research is being dismantled before our eyes. She pointed out that in the mid-1970s, the nation's five-year cancer survival rate was just 49%. Today, it is 68%, thanks to decades of investment in research. Who is for cancer? Maddow asked, underlining the absurdity of narrowing the funding. Yet despite these life-or-death stakes, this policy decision did not receive a lot of attention.

With Trump's media dominance, he is not only flooding the zone with noise, he is allowing major policy choices to unfold in the shadows. Trump's media dominance is reshaping the rules of both politics and journalism. So, what can be done? Journalists must resist treating his every word as the main event. Coverage must shift from amplifying Trump's dominance to exposing its consequences. That means prioritizing policy over provocation, context over outrage, and public interest over spectacle. Trump has hacked the media system. The only way out is for the press to rewrite the code.

On June 14, demonstrators nationwide held No Kings Day protests against Trump's policies and actions during his second presidency. Alongside the ongoing government shutdown, this could mark a turning point. [Recent polls](#) show Trump's approval rating for handling the shutdown down by 20 points. It is clear that Americans want health care protected - a message Trump is losing. The only way that his dominance will be erased is when he starts losing. Another national No Kings protest is already scheduled for October 18.

Robert Weiner is a former White House spokesman in both the Clinton & Bush administrations, as well as former Public Affairs Director under DrugCzar/4-Star General McCaffrey, former spokesman for the House Narcotics Committee under Chairman Charles Rangel, Chief of Staff of the House Aging Committee under Claud Pepper, legislative assistant to then-Cong Ed Koch, spokesman for the House Government Operations and Oversight Committee under John Conyers, and a political aide to Ted Kennedy in his Senate and Presidential runs. Since leaving the White House, he created and currently directs an op-ed group recruiting young journalists as co-writers 1,000+ published to date including with the Globe -- he won the National Press Club President's Award for the program: www.weinerpublic.com/opeds

Ingrid Lang is a policy analyst at Robert Weiner Associates and Solutions for Change Foundation Inc, a student at American University and a Bachelor of Journalism candidate Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet), Oslo, Norway.