



## **No, journalists aren't 'enemy of the American people'**

November 7, 2017

For as much as the phrase “fake news” has been shouted from the rooftops to discredit unwanted reporting, its impact can't be underestimated — for the worse.

A survey released last week by the Cato Institute found that 35 percent of Americans considered “journalists today an enemy of the American people.” These aren't our words; they come directly from the survey — and first were uttered by President Donald Trump, with whom, unfortunately, far too many people agree.

We're not enemies of the American people. We are American people, too, first and foremost. As such, we work for — not against — them.

The troubling attempts to delegitimize the United States' free press have continued to reach astounding highs. As journalists, we're here as an objective third party to present facts in an effort to guarantee news, information and accountability to our readers.

Want our agenda? You just read it in the previous paragraph.

Contrary to countless accusations hurled our way every day, we don't serve any elected official or political party. We report and analyze what's happening and compile that into a single place. Somebody has to serve as gatekeeper, and that's a responsibility that reporters and editors don't take lightly.

Journalists are human. We all have feelings and passions, but, as professionals, we put them to the side to bring impartial news coverage.

Yes, the editorial page is the one place in which we take a side — an age-old tradition that keeps with the public-service mindset of journalism. To do so, our editorial board discusses and agrees on a collective opinion. But our viewpoint is just one of many displayed there.

You're more than welcome to disagree with our take or those on the editorial page. You can question the actions of officials based on the facts gathered and presented throughout our newspapers. That's part of a vibrant marketplace of ideas, of which we're a proud vendor.

But what we do isn't fake. And, just as importantly, we aren't enemies. We want what's best for our city, state and country, just like the 63 percent of Republicans, 38 percent of independents and 11 percent of Democrats who consider us foes.

The [survey by the libertarian Cato Institute](#) provided a very detailed context on First Amendment issues facing Americans. The results were fascinating and showed a diversity of opinions. By and large, the common thread among them all was that we need to have more of a conversation about a number of topics — press freedom, hate speech, free speech on campus and several others.

So, let's talk, rather than screaming and dividing ourselves along partisan lines. This is our two cents to dispel this false but prevalent notion of journalists vs. the country as some zero-sum game.