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### Political Rhetoric and Media Partisanship: Language Resemblance versus Media Bias

Erica Sloan

*Washington University in St. Louis*

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# POLITICAL RHETORIC AND MEDIA PARTISANSHIP: LANGUAGE RESEMBLANCE VERSUS MEDIA BIAS

*Erica Sloan*

*Mentor: Randall Calvert*

In a democracy like our own, the media ideally function to effectively disseminate information on political issues, with language that treats equally the viewpoints of both Democrats and Republicans. An existing literature on media bias seeks to determine how, when, and why the media may, instead, favor the perspective of one party at the expense of the other. In this paper, I explore the underlying rhetorical mechanisms driving the appearance of such media favoritism through a comparative phrase frequency analysis of congressional and media language on three highly partisan social issues: gun control, abortion, and gay rights. Based on the results of the analysis, demonstrating the particular types of partisan language adopted and avoided by the media, I argue that language resemblance between Congress and the media is an insufficient measure for media bias—despite literature that conflates one with the other. By illuminating the nature of both congressional and media language, the phrase frequency analysis serves to shed light on the complex, circular relationship between the two.