



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**THE NORMAN LEAR CENTER AT THE USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL  
ESTABLISHES "RELIABLE RESOURCES FOR BROADCAST  
POLITICAL COVERAGE" WITH \$1.3 MILLION GRANT FROM THE  
PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS**

**"RELIABLE RESOURCES" WILL IDENTIFY, DEVELOP AND DISTRIBUTE TOOLS  
TO HELP LOCAL STATIONS AND NETWORK TELEVISION PROVIDE INNOVATIVE  
AND INFORMATIVE POLITICAL COVERAGE**

LOS ANGELES, July 6, 2000 -- The Norman Lear Center at the USC Annenberg School for Communication has established "Reliable Resources for Broadcast Political Coverage." The project, funded by a \$1.3 million grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts, will focus on improving political coverage on broadcast television by identifying, creating and distributing tools for local stations and network television. This unique effort will attempt to address the problem of an unengaged public, not only by identifying what works in political coverage, but also by putting that information, in an easy to use format, into the hands of the broadcast decision makers.

"Broadcast news is still the largest public square we have in American democracy," said Martin Kaplan, USC Annenberg School for Communication associate dean and director of the Lear Center. "But the pressure for ratings has driven politics from the news, except as a horserace. Our goal is to give broadcasters the tools they need to make important information interesting to big audiences -- to cover civic life as successfully as they cover traffic, weather, sports, crime and entertainment."

"Our project is designed to help hundreds in TV news who want to do a good job and cover politics but are not being given the resources and support they need," said Canny Kennard, former CBS News correspondent and now assistant journalism professor at the USC Annenberg School. "The foot

soldiers in the trenches of television news are told the viewing audience doesn't want political news. We want to help them make the case that Americans want and need high-quality TV coverage of issues and candidates.”

Reliable Resources is a two-year project that will:

- ◆ Create videotape presentations showcasing the most creative and informative Campaign 2000 television coverage for dissemination to television newsrooms
- ◆ Create a cyber-guide containing sources, tips, and info for political journalists, based at the Reliable Resources web page
- ◆ Hold regional workshops, some of which will be in conjunction with broadcasters' professional associations and mid-career training programs
- ◆ Reward the country's best broadcast political coverage at local and network levels, with the newly-established USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Broadcast Political Coverage. The first award will be presented in Washington D.C. next year.
- ◆ Showcase the importance of political coverage on broadcast and local television at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, where Reliable Resources will make its first public presence (details forthcoming)
- ◆ Create an advisory board comprised of distinguished political scientists and broadcast journalists

The goal of Reliable Resources ([www.reliableresources.org](http://www.reliableresources.org)) is to develop and distribute tools to help local and network television provide innovative and informative political coverage, and to recognize and reward those efforts.

The Norman Lear Center ([www.entertainment.usc.edu](http://www.entertainment.usc.edu)) is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center exploring implications of the convergence of entertainment, commerce, and society. The impact of entertainment on news and politics is a principal focus of the Lear Center

The Pew Charitable Trusts ([www.pewtrusts.com](http://www.pewtrusts.com)) support nonprofit activities in the areas of culture, education, the environment, health and human services, public policy and religion.