

# Five Questions The Political Media Is Wrestling With In Covering America's 'Uncivil War' | FiveThirtyEight

By Perry Bacon Jr.

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The political media has long been both powerful and controversial — no surprise, as it essentially plays the role of referee in American politics. But how the media covers politics is perhaps more important than ever right now, as the United States is dealing with big, super high-stakes issues, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic and America's partisan "[uncivil war](#)." Like major corporations, the media is in the crosshairs of fights between the two parties where there may be no middle ground.

So here are five of the major questions about how the media should be covering politics that are now being debated among journalists, people who work in politics and media experts.

## **How negatively should the media cover the Republican Party?**

Even at the start of the Trump presidency, political journalists [covered Trump more negatively](#) than they had recent other presidents. And in the wake of the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, news coverage of Trump was scathing.

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