

Veteran Broadcasters Analyze and Suggest a New Direction for Public Media

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 8, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- President Donald Trump is proposing in his 2026 budget to end funding for NPR and PBS, but it could begin a new era of creativity and revenue for public broadcasting, according to the co-hosts of an independently produced, weekly news and public affairs program on PBS.



PBS and NPR should be less timid about collaborating with sponsors and letting them have a say."

Llewellyn King

Opening this week's edition of "[White House Chronicle](#)," Host Llewellyn King and Co-host Adam Clayton Powell III, discussed how longtime conservative animus resulted in Trump's May 2 executive order, directing the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to cease federal funding for NPR and PBS.

Trump's order cited "biased and partisan news coverage."

Powell, who served in executive positions at CBS, NPR and PBS, said when he was at NPR, where he served as the first director of news and information in the 1980s, "We were making a very deliberate attempt to be even-handed, as we did at CBS. But that has slipped away as time has gone on."

King, whose career in print and broadcast journalism spans three continents, and such outlets as the BBC, The New York Herald Tribune and The Washington Post, said "fairness" rather than objectivity is what newsrooms should strive for.

He thinks NPR and PBS haven't changed that much over the years in their coverage of news "which looks on the humanitarian side of things, and that is often interpreted as being liberal."

Powell said, "People need to get out of not just their comfort zones, but also their comfort neighborhoods. There's no national news bureau of any commercial or noncommercial network that's in a Zip Code that was won by Donald Trump."

NPR decided to diversify its production base geographically, "So what do you do, NPR? You open a production center in Los Angeles. Oh!" Powell exclaimed.

"Okay. It's faraway from Washington, at least geographically, but not so much in viewpoint," he

said, adding, "It would be very interesting to have a production center in North Dakota, or Indiana, or Idaho, or Iowa."

The news at NPR and PBS is driven from the East and West coasts, and they have missed the fact that Trump is popular in the country's vast midsection, and an opportunity to connect with conservative audiences, King and Powell agreed.

They also felt that creativity, which could lead to income for public broadcasting, is missing, which is contributing to audience losses.

King talked about the proliferation of satire shows in the 1960s at the BBC, including "Beyond the Fringe," "Good Evening," and "Monty Python."

In his syndicated column, which accompanies the airing of this week's "White House Chronicle," King wrote, "The BBC took chances, and it worked. I have a feeling that if you walked into PBS with a blueprint for 'The Daily Show' or 'The Late Show with Stephen Colbert,' you wouldn't get far."

Powell spoke about how William S. Paley, the legendary executive who built CBS, landed NBC's big fish — Jack Benny, Bing Crosby and Red Skelton — by letting them control and produce their own shows on CBS, and at the end of the runs, they would own their material free and clear.

It changed the fortunes of CBS, which then went on to become the dominant network.

"If PBS produced great entertainment programs, instead of buying them from the UK, they could sell them around the world, as the BBC does," King said, adding, "Great entertainment might not be enough income to solve all of its problems, but at least it would open up a new revenue stream."

At the end of the day, King and Powell agreed on the show, what public broadcasting needs is to be known as a creative hub: the first place for new ideas, performers and writers.

"To do this," King wrote in his column, "it should be less timid about collaborating with creative sponsors and letting them have a say. Why not the 'Google Hour?' Or the 'ChatGPT Theater'? The golden age of television was marked by that kind of sponsor involvement."

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