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Education Policy Research Unit

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

from the **Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU)**

and the **Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL)**
at **Arizona State University**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 9, 2002

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Find the complete text of this report at:

http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/epru_2002_Research_Writing.htm

**HERITAGE FOUNDATION'S EDUCATION REPORTS
RECEIVE LITTLE CRITICAL SCRUTINY, STUDY FINDS**

TEMPE, Ariz -- Education reform documents and spokespersons from the Heritage Foundation tend to be presented in the media with little critical scrutiny, a new report finds. When the news media use the Heritage Foundation as a source on education, the public and policy makers do not get the information they need to judge the quality of the statements, say the study's authors.

The conclusions are part of the "Media Impact of Think Tank Education Publications 2001" released Thursday, May 9, by the Education Policy Studies Laboratory at Arizona State University. The report is the first in a series examining the attention that think tanks receive in media reporting on education.

The Heritage Foundation, an important player in domestic policy discussions since the 1970s -- and especially during the terms of Republican presidents Ronald Reagan and both George H.W. Bush and his son, George W. Bush -- sets as one of its tasks “the ‘retail and wholesale marketing’ of conservative values,” the report notes. In 2001, the researchers found, the foundation received 159 citations related to education alone.

A prime example of the uncritical reporting is the treatment of the Heritage Foundation’s book, *No Excuses*, which describes purported successes in various urban schools serving populations living in poverty. Although several education scholars have published critiques finding fault with the methodology and conclusions of *No Excuses*, such criticisms are virtually absent in the popular press coverage.

Furthermore, Heritage’s designated spokespersons on education arguably lack the training and experience necessary to comment authoritatively on education issues. “A lack of relevant expertise is consistent across the Heritage Foundation’s seven ‘experts in education,’” the report states.

“When the news media use the Heritage Foundation as a source on education, you don’t get the whole picture,” says Eric Haas. “You will see scientific words like “study” or “analyst,” but never words like “polemic” or “marketer.”

Eric Haas is a doctoral student in education policy at Arizona State University and Networking Coordinator of the Education Policy Studies Laboratory.

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The Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU) conducts original research, provides independent analyses of research and policy documents, and facilitates educational innovation. EPRU facilitates the work of leading academic experts in a variety of disciplines to help inform the public debate about education policy issues.

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The Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL) at Arizona State University offers high quality analyses of national education policy issues and provides an analytical resource for educators, journalists, and citizens. It includes the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU), the Education Policy Analysis Archives (EPAA), the Education Policy Reports Project (EPRP), the Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU), and the Language Policy Research Unit (LPRU).

The EPSL is directed by ASU Professor Alex Molnar.

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