

WHAT IF THE MEDIA RECLAIMED THEIR ROLE AS FOURTH ESTATE...

And nobody cared?

ThinkProgress has a great compendium of mainstream newspaper editorials criticizing the weekend's FISA debacle. Just about every major paper in the US (with the notable exception of the Wall Street Journal) has come out against the new FISA law. I'm even on the same side of this issue as Fred Hiatt, which kind of scares me.

Which means the next six months will be a test of how irrelevant the media have become. It made a difference, after all, that the media generally backed the Administration's call to war. Which was kind of the final straw in a loss of credibility for the media. So now that the print media, at least, is almost universally on the correct side of an issue, will it matter?

Many of these editorials mention the six month sunset of the bill, which ought to present an interesting challenge for these newspapers. Can they sustain their outrage—and educate voters on the reasons for it—sufficiently to make a difference come January, when we have the opportunity to change this abysmal law?

Or has the media already lost any ability to sway public opinion?

Update: I guess this post would be an appropriate place to note that the TimesSelect opinion wall is coming down. And I didn't even miss having David Brooks to kick around. (Oh wait ... I **am** a TimesSelect subscriber! I guess I just never found Brooks worthy enough to read.)