CASE 7-7: Cable’s Friend in Congress.

Moral Agent: Marcus Conrad, CEO of Conrad Communications.

Question: Should the company support Senator McRae defense fund?
1. Would people link a contribution back to CNC?
2. Would it be a conflict of interest to support Senator McRae?

Issue: Senator McRae has been accused of sexual harassment by many of his female staff. He has been a major supporter of the cable industry while he has been the chairman of the Senate’s Commerce Committee. But Conrad’s corporation has a strict policy against sexual harassment and would fire McRae if he worked for the corporation if such allegations came up. It is also a problem to support Senator McRae because CNC will be hosting coverage on the proceedings which could be a possible conflict of interest if they support his defense fund. Also a fact brought up by the president of the news division is their “independence- or at least the perception among…viewers.”

Other Major Figures:
Cassandra Clark, vice president for communications and marketing
Michael Jones, vice president for sales and promotion
Peter Hamilton, president of CNC

SAD Analysis:
Situation Definition:
- CNC is an independent news corporation and receives no government help.
- McRae is helpful toward cable television corporations when it comes to policies in congress.

Analysis:
- Issue of Conflict of interest considered being a problem by the president of CNC and vice presidents of Conrad Communications.
- Issue of Conrad Communications’ strict policy on sexual harassment.
- Issue of support in Congress by McRae’s possible replacement.
- Issue of whether to support the defense fund of Senator McRae.
- Issue of giving unbiased new coverage in the eyes of viewers.

Moral Theories:
A) Deontological
- Duty to be unbiased in coverage of news and events.
- Duty to be free of all government help and be an independent new organization.
Duty to provide ways for the corporation to grow.

B) Telelogical
- Chance of being pointed to as biased news coverage.

C) Value
- Conrad Communication could support McRae.
- Do nothing because of conflict of interest.

Decision:
There are two definite possibilities for Conrad Comm. to do. They could support McRae because of his cable friendly policies or they could sit back and do nothing to support him.

The possibility of the conflict of interest makes the decisions to do nothing, but just report the news and hope for the Senator’s innocence, look as if it is the best option.

To support McRae would seem to point to cooperation between the senator and this news corporation. This would seem to point to Conrad Communication being controlled by some senatorial influence.

But if they don’t support McRae then there is a chance that his replacement will not be as friendly to cable corporations. This would make it harder on Conrad Communication to grow in the cable industry.

Conrad Communication is faced with the moral dilemma of providing untainted news, but also wants to grow financially and physically. But in this instance it doesn’t seem that they can choose both.

In the long run it would be better for Conrad Communication to stick to their guns of being an independent news organization and not back McRae. Because the senatorial candidates have the chance of coming and going, but if they get tagged with the title of being involved with government officials and somewhat controlled by them.