



PMJA

PUBLIC MEDIA JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION

Joint statement of journalist-support organizations on government attacks on press freedom

Fair, accurate and independent reporting is essential to a functioning democracy. Without it, corruption and misinformation flourish. As organizations that champion journalists and the public's right to know, we strongly condemn the campaign underway in Washington to penalize independent reporting on the government and its activities.

In a protracted war over words, the Trump administration has **banned** the Associated Press from White House events because the news service continues to call the “Gulf of Mexico” by its long-standing name while acknowledging the president’s executive order renaming it the “Gulf of America.”

This disturbing challenge to journalistic independence is part of a troubling pattern that extends well beyond the White House press corps. For example, the Trump-appointed chair of the Federal Communications Commission has taken **extraordinary steps** to investigate and intimidate broadcasters over their internal policies and constitutionally protected editorial decisions. These actions by the head of this historically bipartisan, independent regulatory body set a dangerous precedent and risk giving the government greater control over which voices are heard.

The administration also has **evicted** longtime news organizations from the Pentagon pressroom, giving their desks to news outlets that favorably covered the administration’s agenda.

President Trump and his congressional allies have long opposed what they viewed as government efforts to coerce speech. In 2023, for example, U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan and 44 other members of Congress said as much in a brief submitted in a U.S. Supreme Court case in which conservatives accused the Biden administration of coercing social media platforms to adopt pro-COVID vaccine policies. That **brief in *Murthy v. Missouri*** stated, “Official pressure to suppress speech violates the First Amendment.”

When leaders try to silence reporters through intimidation, **legal threats** and denial of access, they are not protecting the country; they are protecting themselves from scrutiny. This is how authoritarian regimes operate — by crushing dissent, punishing those who expose inconvenient facts and replacing truth with propaganda.

The First Amendment is an integral part of the U.S. Constitution that President Trump swore to “preserve, protect and defend.” He also signed an **executive order** on day one to "ensure that no Federal Government officer, employee, or agent engages in or facilitates any conduct that would unconstitutionally abridge the free speech of any American citizen." The president must abide by his oath of office and executive order and ensure that First Amendment principles are forcefully upheld.

In a nation founded on freedom of speech, regardless of party or ideology, the government can never compel agreement with its viewpoint as a condition of access to information. The administration must lift the ban on AP. And the administration must cease punishing news organizations based on their reporting.

Society of Professional Journalists

AAN Publishers (formerly Association of Alternative Newsmedia)

American Society of Magazine Editors

Asian American Journalists Association

Associated Collegiate Press

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

Buffalo Newspaper Guild - CWA Local 31026

Criminal Justice Journalists

Defending Rights & Dissent

Denver Newspaper Guild - CWA Local 37074

Education Writers Association

Freedom of the Press Foundation

Inter American Press Association (IAPA)

IAPE, Local 1096, TNG-CWA

Indigenous Journalists Association

iSolon.org

Journalism & Women Symposium (JAWS)

Military Reporters & Editors

National Association of Black Journalists

National Association of Hispanic Journalists

National Association of Science Writers

National Federation of Press Women

National Press Photographers Association

National Scholastic Press Association

National Writers Union

NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ+ Journalists

New Hampshire NewsGuild

Online News Association

Project Censored

Public Media Journalists Association

Quill and Scroll

Radio Television Digital News Association

Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing (SABEW)

Society of Environmental Journalists

The Association of Health Care Journalists

The Media Guild of the West - CWA Local 39213

The NewsGuild-CWA

The News Media Guild, Local 31222, TNG-CWA (union representing AP journalists)

The NewsGuild of New York

The NewsGuild of Philadelphia TNG-CWA Local 38010

Toledo NewsGuild, CWA Local 34043

Washington-Baltimore News Guild