

**THE WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
MUST SEND A FORTHRIGHT MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP  
CONDEMNING HIS ATTACKS ON THE FIRST AMENDMENT**

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To the Officers, Board of Directors, and Members of the White House Correspondents' Association (WHCA):

We, the undersigned, call upon the White House Correspondents' Association to use the occasion of the White House Correspondents' Dinner, to forcefully demonstrate opposition to President Trump's efforts to trample freedom of the press.

The dinner has long served as a symbol of the vital and irreplaceable role of a free press in American democracy and a celebration of the First Amendment and the journalists who uphold it. President Trump's systematic, sustained, and unprecedented attacks on the free press (detailed below) render his presence at such an event a profound contradiction of its purpose.

The collective weight of the administration's actions — retaliatory access bans, coercive regulatory investigations, frivolous lawsuits against the press, defunding of public broadcasting, dismantling of international broadcasting, physical restrictions on journalists, personal verbal attacks on reporters, assaults on the media in official White House press releases and social media posts, the arrest of journalists, and the pardoning of those who committed violence against the press — represent the most systematic and comprehensive assault on freedom of the press by a sitting American president.

There is a long tradition of presidents attending the White House Correspondents Association Dinner. But these are not normal times, and this cannot be business as usual with the press standing up to applaud the man who attacks them on a daily basis.

We understand that some journalists plan to wear pocket handkerchiefs or lapel pins with the words of the First Amendment. And continuing in that spirit, we believe the White House Correspondents Association should take stronger action by issuing — from the podium — a forceful defense of freedom of the press and condemnation of those who threaten that freedom, followed by a standing toast to the First Amendment and a pledge to continue upholding such a critical cornerstone of our democracy. Speak forcefully, in front of the man who seeks to undermine our country's long tradition of an independent, strong, and free press.

We also urge the WHCA to reaffirm, without equivocation, that freedom of the press is not a partisan issue and that the Association will not normalize this behavior but instead fight back against any officeholder who has waged systematic war against the journalists whose work the dinner celebrates.

### **Trump Administration's Attacks on Freedom of the Press**

- In February 2025, the Trump administration banned Associated Press reporters from pooled press events at the White House and aboard Air Force One, after the AP declined to alter its longstanding editorial style guide to replace the internationally recognized name 'Gulf of Mexico' with the President's preferred term 'Gulf of America.'
- In early 2025, the Trump administration stripped office space at the Pentagon from CNN, The Washington Post, The Hill, NBC News, The New York Times, NPR, Politico, and other outlets whose coverage the administration deemed unfavorable.
- The Trump administration implemented Pentagon press rules in September 2025 prohibiting reporters from reporting any information not cleared by the Defense Department, a move a court ultimately ruled violated the First Amendment.
- President Trump has engaged in a sustained pattern of personal verbal attacks on individual reporters, including calling ABC reporter Mary Bruce 'a terrible person and a terrible reporter,' calling Bloomberg News reporter Catherine Lucey 'piggy,' calling CBS reporter Nancy Cordes a 'stupid person', calling New York Times reporter Katie Rogers 'a third-rate reporter' and 'ugly both inside and out,' calling CNN anchor Kaitlan Collins 'the worst reporter,' calling ABC reporter Rachel Scott 'obnoxious' and 'a terrible reporter,' a pattern disproportionately targeting women journalists. Trump also threatening to revoke ABC's broadcast license when the network's reporters asked questions he disliked.
- In a speech at the Department of Justice on March 14, 2025, President Trump, publicly called CNN and MSNBC 'corrupt' and 'illegal' and broadly attacked the independent reporting of major American news organizations as 'illegal', using the bully pulpit of the presidency to delegitimize and intimidate the free press.
- In November 2025, the White House launched an official government webpage titled 'Hall of Shame,' naming and targeting individual journalists and news organizations for reporting that the administration disagreed with.
- In December 2025, Trump publicly accused The New York Times of treason, labeling it 'the enemy of the people' — rhetoric that press freedom organizations worldwide have identified as characteristic of authoritarian governments.
- President Trump, through FCC Chairman Brendan Carr, launched politically motivated investigations into major broadcast media organizations, including ABC, NBC, CBS, and San Francisco radio station KCBS, for matters ranging from their coverage of immigration enforcement to editorial decisions, using the coercive power of broadcast licensing as a weapon to threaten and suppress unfavorable journalism.
- In January 2025, FCC Chairman Carr launched an investigation into NPR and PBS over their underwriting practices, threatening the federal funding of public broadcasting which serves more than 99 percent of the American population, including rural communities that rely on public media for emergency and disaster information.
- The Trump administration filed a lawsuit against The Des Moines Register, its parent company Gannett, and pollster J. Ann Selzer over a pre-election poll, and the Pulitzer Center, using personal and governmental litigation as instruments of pressure and intimidation against news organizations. The President has also sued the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal for billions of dollars for alleged defamation.

- President Trump filed a lawsuit against ABC News and anchor George Stephanopoulos, which Disney — ABC's parent company — settled for \$15 million directed to the future Trump Presidential Library, plus \$1 million in legal fees, a settlement that legal scholars warned would produce a chilling effect on network journalism.
- President Trump filed a lawsuit against Paramount, the corporate parent of CBS News, over the editing of a '60 Minutes' interview. Paramount settled, paying \$16 million to the future Trump Presidential Library — despite legal experts characterizing the suit as frivolous and predicting CBS would prevail at trial. The settlement came as Paramount sought FCC approval for a multibillion-dollar merger.
- Trump's FCC Chairman threatened Disney and ABC with their broadcast license if they didn't suspend Jimmy Kimmel after comments that conservatives took issue with. ABC took Kimmel off the air for a week.
- In early 2026, FBI agents raided the home of a Washington Post reporter, seizing her phone and computers — a move the Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press described as endangering confidential sources and undermining investigative journalism, and which PEN America called evidence of 'a growing assault on independent reporting'.
- In 2026, federal agents arrested journalists Don Lemon and Georgia Fort while they were covering a news event, with two separate federal judges refusing to sign arrest warrants for lack of evidence of any crime, before the Justice Department obtained a grand jury indictment — a prosecution that press freedom advocates characterized as an assault on the First Amendment right to cover matters of public interest.
- The Trump Administration acted against two-foreign born journalists. Mario Guevara, an Emmy Award-winning Spanish-language journalist originally from El Salvador, had lived in the United States for nearly two decades. He was deported by ICE after he was arrested while covering a No Kings rally. Estefany Rodriguez Florez, a Colombian-born journalist who was seeking asylum, was arrested by ICE a day after reporting on ICE raids in Nashville. She was held for two weeks before being released on bail.
- On May 1, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14290, titled 'Ending Taxpayer Subsidization of Biased Media,' directing an end to all federal funding for NPR and PBS through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting — with the White House accusing the media outlets of receiving “tens of millions of dollars in taxpayer funds to spread radical, woke propaganda disguised as ‘news’.” In July 2025 he signed legislation revoking \$1.1 billion in already-appropriated federal funding for public broadcasting, causing the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to shut down and placing over 180 public radio and television stations at risk of closure.
- The Trump administration moved to dismantle the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), silencing Voice of America — a journalistic institution with 83 years of history — and terminating several US news services that broadcast to those living under authoritarian regimes.
- Within the first hours of his second term, President Trump suspended hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign aid specifically designated to support press freedom overseas.

- On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued a blanket pardon to more than 1,500 individuals charged or convicted in connection with the January 6, 2021 attack on the United States Capitol, including at least eight individuals convicted or charged with violent crimes against journalists present at the scene, and three convicted for destroying media equipment — crimes that were documented on video and prosecuted by the Department of Justice — sending an message that attacks on the press will be forgiven.
- President Trump has publicly expressed personal support for media owners who have demonstrated favoritism toward his administration — including praising Skydance CEO David Ellison (whose company acquired CBS/Paramount under Trump's watch), hosting Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison at the White House for business announcements, and praising Fox News and its leadership — creating a system of rewards for compliant media and punishment for independent journalism that fundamentally corrupts the relationship between government and a free press.
- The United States has fallen to a ranking of 57th out of 180 countries in the 2025 Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index — its lowest ranking since the index was first compiled in 2002 — a dramatic and historic decline that reflects the documented and measurable deterioration of press freedom under President Trump's administration

### ***SIGNATORIES- ORGANIZATIONS***

*SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS*  
*COMMITTEE TO PROTECT JOURNALISTS*  
*NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK JOURNALISTS*  
*NATIONAL PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION*  
*FREEDOM OF THE PRESS FOUNDATION*  
*COALITION FOR WOMEN IN JOURNALISM*  
*RADIO TELEVISION DIGITAL NEWS ASSOCIATION*  
*THE MEDIA & DEMOCRACY PROJECT*

*INDIVIDUAL SIGNATORIES BELOW*

Wolfgang Achtner  
Jim Acosta  
Lynne Adrine  
Buba Adschiew  
Rebecca Aguilar  
Douglas Alden  
Mary Alfieri  
Kent Alley  
Karen Allyn  
Mara Altschuler  
David A. Andelman  
Wyatt Andrews  
Joe Appio  
Jane Applegate  
Joe Armstrong  
Perry Ascher  
Thalia Assuras  
Claire Atkinson  
Sara Au  
Jennifer Avellino  
Jane Aylor  
Judy Bachrach  
Elizabeth Bakos  
Lolita Baldor  
Gale Baldwin  
Teeya Barnes  
Don Bayley  
Ralph J Begleiter  
Nanette Belanger  
Jon Belmont  
Ann Benjamin  
Pamela Benson  
Peter Bernard

John Berry  
Tom Bettag  
Carrie Biggs-Adams  
John Bilotta  
George R Blake  
Jeffrey Blount  
James Blue  
David Bordewyk  
Lori A. Bores  
Dennis Bounds  
Nora Boustany  
Charles Braico  
Clare Bramley  
Mark Brender  
Eliot Brenner  
Sam Brooks  
David Brown  
Donna Brusoski  
Brian Buchanan  
Tom Budai  
A'Lelia Bundles  
Ashley Bunton  
P. Kenneth Burns  
Robert Burns  
Chris Bury  
Ian Cameron  
Barry R. Camp  
Susan Caraher  
Mary Cardaras  
Fran Carpentier  
Silvio Carrillo  
Helen Casey-Glover  
Martha Caskey

John M. Castagna  
Albert Certo  
Thomasina Nista  
Chaffardet  
Stuart Chamberlain  
Sandra F. Chance  
Barbara Chen  
Jack Chesnutt  
Jocelyn Hatch  
Christensen  
Frank Cioffi  
Jack Cloherty  
Lisa Cohen  
David Cohen  
Ron Cohen  
M. Scott Cole  
Paul Colten  
Michael Connor  
Jim Connor  
Fiona Conway  
David Cooper  
Loretta Cooper  
Brian Cooper  
Todd Copilevitz  
Tyrone Couch  
Pam Coulter  
Paul Courson  
Liz Craft  
Bob Crawford  
Bebe Crouse  
Patrick J Cullen  
Sheila M. Cullen  
Linda Grist Cunningham

Don Cuppett Jr  
Ann Curry  
Leo Cusimano  
Hugh Cutly  
Janice D'Arcy  
Glen Dacy  
Kathleen Dacy  
Chris Dahl  
Ted David  
Mitch Davis  
Rick Davis  
Jimmie Davis  
Darnise Davis  
Walter Dean  
Greg DeRego  
Susan DeVico  
William Diehl  
Arlene Dillon  
Kim Dillon  
Greg Dobbs  
Sam Donaldson  
Bob Dotson  
Linda Douglass  
Trisha Doyle  
Kathleen Drew  
Jeff Dubin  
Dennis Dunlavey  
Todd Easton  
Ed Eaves  
Jonathan Ebinger  
Dave Edmark  
Mike Eisgrau  
Dale Eisman

Beth Elliott  
Robert Emery  
Dawn Ennis  
David Ensor  
Bob Epstein  
Joan Erle  
Tom Farmer  
Bob Faw  
Barbara Fedida  
Martha Feingold  
Kate Felsen  
Joyce Ferder  
Robert Ferraro  
Pam Fessler  
Andy Field  
Francesca Fifis  
Kevin Finnegan  
Gena Fitzgerald  
Lynn Flaster  
Ellen Fleysher  
William Florence  
Thomas Flynn  
Ken Fortenberry  
Mary Claude Foster  
Jeffrey Fox  
Allan Dodds Frank  
Elissa Free  
Lisa Freed  
Henry Freeman  
Justin Friedland  
Frances Gaeta  
Alex Garcia  
Jean Garner

Tom Gauger  
Art Gauthier  
Steve Geimann  
David Gelber  
Steve Gendel  
Amy Baldwin George  
Nora Gerard  
Robert Gillette  
Amanda B. Gillooly  
Allison Girvin  
Garrett Glaser  
Amy Goldberg  
Jeff Goldman  
Bob Goldsborough  
Vince Gonzales  
Bill Gorman  
Cheryl Gould  
Deborah Grau  
Bill Green  
David Gross  
David Grossman  
Patricia Guadalupe  
Mike Gudgell  
Tony Guida  
David Guilbault  
Donna Brown Guillaume  
Scott Gurvey  
Brian Haefeli  
Liz Halloran  
Masha Hamilton  
Paul Hanson  
Frances Ann Hardin  
John Harwood

Alicia Haste  
Kelly Hawes  
Ashley Hayes  
Brian Healy  
David Hechler  
Marilyn Heck  
Mike Hegedus  
Greg Hernandez  
Jeff Hewitt  
Scott Higham  
Bob Hoenig  
Ray Hoffman  
Elaine Hogue  
Roberta Hollander  
Sally V. Holm  
Peggy Magner Holter  
Jan Hopkins  
Sari Horwitz  
Jane Horwitz  
Ellie Houghtaling  
Dean Hovell  
Alexander B. Howard  
Matt Hoye  
Paul R. Huard  
Dick Hubert  
Sheila Scott Hula  
Edward Hula  
Robert Hurley  
Chris Ingram  
Charles Jaco  
Stephanie Jacobs  
Pam Janis  
Kayce Freed Jennings

Ed Jennings  
Paul Jennings  
Richard Jensen  
Catherine Johns  
Dave Johnson  
Bryant Jordan  
James C. Joyce  
Jackie Judd  
Emily Just  
Lewis Kamb  
Evelyn Kanter  
Sally Kaplan  
Marilyn Kaskel  
Sheilah Kast  
Amy Katz  
Sandra Kaz  
Jurate Kazickas  
Janet Keefer  
Paris M Keena  
Rita Kempley  
Kiran Khalid  
Shelley Kilburn  
Peter King  
Christianne Klein  
Lisa Koenig  
Janet K. Kolodzy  
Andrea Koppel  
Brad Kornfeld  
Bob Kovach  
Frank Kracher  
Mark Kramer  
Joan Krauter  
Mike Kravinsky

Anita Krichmar  
Rod Kuckro  
Jeannie Kung  
Martin Kurcias  
Jill Landes  
Amy La Porte  
David Larimer  
Jonathan Larsen  
Margaret Larson  
Susan Leavitt  
Deanna Lee  
John Leisher  
Emily Lenzner  
George Lewis  
Warren Lewis  
Terri Lichstein  
Eric Lichtblau  
Bill Lichtenstein  
Letti Lister  
Thomas Loebig  
Alice Look  
James Love  
Della Lowe  
John Lower  
Steve Lubetkin  
Bettina Luescher  
Chuck Lustig  
Rusty Lutz  
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Vicki Mabrey  
Krystal Mabry  
Peter Maer  
Alice Maggin

Edie Magnus  
Karen Magnuson  
Rosemary Marchese  
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Steve Marshall  
Jim Martin  
Mark Matthews  
Dar Maxwell  
Lee McEachern  
Jack McElroy  
Molly McRoberts  
George Merlis  
Dick Meyer  
Charles Meyerson  
Susan Miller  
Katie Milway  
Jen Mitol  
Darryl Moment  
Luz Montez  
Robert Moore  
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Nancy Nathan  
Kiran Nazish

Jim Nedelka  
Wayne Nelson  
Brian Nelson  
Deborah Nelson  
Sharon Newman  
Kevin Newman  
Mede Nix  
Steve North  
Gary Nurenberg  
Eileen O'Connor  
John O'Leary  
Richard O'Regan  
John C. O'Rourke  
Doug Obert  
Karen Ocamb  
Patricia Ochs  
Marika Olsen  
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Pam Paladin  
Ken Paulson  
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Hampton Pearson Jr.  
Judy Penniman  
Jennie L Phipps  
Barbara Pierce  
Aileen Pincus

Randall Pinkston  
Barbara Pinto  
Gina Pollack  
Susan Pomerantz  
Giselle Portenier  
Deborah Potter  
Dennis Powell  
Bill Press  
Steven Pressman  
Howard Price  
Kathie Prieto  
Mary Primiano  
Stan Punzel  
Candace Purdom  
Christal Rabalais  
Frank J Radice  
Gene Randall  
Frank Raphael  
Dan Rather  
Jennifer Reingold  
Dawn Reiss  
Jill Reyes  
Bruce Rheins  
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Don Riggs  
John Riggs  
Trudy Ring  
Bob Ritter  
Steve Roberts  
Rhonda Roberts  
Amber Roessner  
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Rick Roller  
Ed Rose  
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Mark Scheerer  
Steven Schnee  
Dwight Schneider  
Richard Schneider  
Howard Schoenholtz  
Stu Schutzman  
Ellen Schweiger  
Carmine D. Scicchitano  
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Richard Sergay  
Frank Sesno  
Larry Shaw  
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Lynn Sherr  
Thomas Shine  
Jennifer Siebens  
Debra Silimeo  
Hank Silverberg  
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Jim Slade  
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Andrea Smith  
Stephanie Smith  
Mimi Spillane  
Steven Springer  
Andrew Springer  
Robin Sproul  
Scott Stachowiak  
Marianne Keeley Stack  
Steve Stahl  
Lisa Stark  
Meredith Stark  
Rosy Stefanatos  
Seth A. Stern  
Michael Lee Stever  
Amy Stewart  
Stephanie Stickley  
Eva Stimson  
George Strait  
Valerie Strauss  
Claire Swift  
David Taffet  
Deborah Talley  
Civia Tamarkin  
Mardi Tatton  
Whitney Taylor

Zack Taylor  
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Georgeanne Thanos  
Steve Thode  
Christine Thoma  
Kevin Tibbles  
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Mc Nelly Torres  
Andrea Tortora  
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Lucian K. Truscott IV  
Sonia Tucker  
Haig Tufankjian  
Doug Tunnell  
Trish Turner  
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Elyse Weiner  
David Weiner  
Jim Welch  
Susan Wells  
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Helen Westwood

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Scotti Williston

Kevin Wilson

Christine Wolf

Charlie Wolfson

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Deborah Woolley

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Brian Yaklyvich

Carter Yang

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Jaime Zamora

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Chandra Zeikel

Stratis Zervos

Gail Zimmerman