

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Condemning recent attacks on the free press by President Donald J. Trump and reaffirming the United States commitment to preserving and protecting freedom of the press as a cornerstone of democracy.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Condemning recent attacks on the free press by President Donald J. Trump and reaffirming the United States commitment to preserving and protecting freedom of the press as a cornerstone of democracy.

Whereas a free and independent press is fundamental to the preservation of democracy, ensuring government accountability, an informed citizenry, and the protection of fundamental rights;

Whereas President Donald J. Trump has taken direct action to harm and restrict press freedoms and has repeatedly attacked the press through inflammatory rhetoric in his speeches and on social media, including—

(1) accusing, without evidence, media outlets such as The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal,

MSNBC, CNN, ABC, CBS, and NBC of “illegal” behavior during a speech at the Department of Justice;

(2) claiming CNN and MSNBC networks are “political arms of the Democrat Party” during a speech at the Department of Justice;

(3) excluding the Associated Press from the White House press pool access due to disputes over naming conventions, leading to legal challenges concerning First Amendment violations;

(4) filing a lawsuit against CBS News over a “60 Minutes” interview with Vice President Kamala Harris, alleging biased editing and calling for CBS to lose broadcast licenses;

(5) seeking to defund National Public Radio and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), including launching a Federal Communications Commission probe;

(6) refusing to take questions from NBC News reporters, claiming the network is “discredited”;

(7) seeking to impose the Administration’s policy preferences on independent news organizations by forcing PBS to eliminate its diversity, equity, and inclusion office using threats of government funding cuts and ignoring reporters who list pronouns in their email signatures; and

(8) rescinding a Department of Justice policy against subpoenaing journalists, exposing journalists’ sources to the threat of possible identification and punishment;

Whereas President Trump has used executive action to significantly reduce the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM), leading to the placement of Voice of America journalists on administrative leave and the attempted termination of grants for Radio Free Asia, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and Middle East

Broadcasting Network, which broadcast news to regions lacking free press;

Whereas these actions demonstrate disdain for the fundamental rights of freedom of speech and freedom of the press specifically protected in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution;

Whereas these actions set a dangerous precedent, emboldening authoritarian regimes abroad to suppress free expression and silence dissent, and endangering the lives of journalists working in or broadcasting in authoritarian countries;

Whereas, as of the date of the introduction of this resolution, 11 USAGM reporters are behind bars abroad, and international employees of USAGM in both Washington, D.C. and abroad are on work visas and risk deportation to hostile countries without the support and protection of the United States; and

Whereas the United States has historically been a global leader in championing press freedom and condemning censorship and must reaffirm that commitment: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) strongly condemns President Donald J.
3 Trump’s attacks on the press, including efforts to
4 delegitimize and restrict journalistic institutions;

5 (2) reaffirms the essential role of a free press
6 in preserving democracy and ensuring governmental
7 accountability;

1 (3) urges the executive branch to respect the
2 rights of journalists and allow them to perform their
3 duties without fear of retaliation;

4 (4) calls for continued efforts to secure the re-
5 lease of the 11 USAGM journalists imprisoned
6 abroad; and

7 (5) expresses solidarity with journalists who
8 face threats, harassment, or violence as a result of
9 their commitment to truth and public service.