

1 **Respect and Freedom for Journalism**

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3 **WHEREAS** journalism is the only profession explicitly protected by the U.S. Constitution;¹ and

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5 **WHEREAS** a press corps that calls out government failures at all levels is fundamental to the functioning of all
6 democracies; and

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8 **WHEREAS** journalism is under attack from the highest levels of government, with President Donald Trump
9 regularly excoriating what he considers unfavorable coverage as “fake news,” and calling the news media the
10 “enemy of the American people;” and

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12 **WHEREAS** the UN’s Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Expression, and on Human Rights, issued a joint
13 statement August 2, 2018, saying, “These attacks [by Trump] run counter to the country’s obligations to respect
14 press freedom and international human rights law;”² and

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16 **WHEREAS** in 2018 to date, 24 journalists have been attacked, including in June of 2018 a gunman killing 4
17 journalists and a member of the staff of the Capital Gazette newsroom in Annapolis, Maryland;³ and

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19 **WHEREAS** as pointed out by the American Civil Liberties Union,⁴ “The media, especially in national security
20 cases, serves as an essential check against government malfeasance and can function only when it can guarantee
21 the safety and anonymity of sources;” and

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23 **WHEREAS** Attorney General Jeff Sessions, asked in a House Judiciary Committee hearing whether he would
24 commit to not jailing journalists for protecting their sources responded, “There are some things that the press
25 seems to think they have an absolute right to... they do not have an absolute right to;”⁵ and

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27 **WHEREAS** federal “media shield” laws, such as the bi-partisan Free Flow of Information Act (H.R. 4382), have
28 passed in the House of Representatives,⁶ only to die in the Senate;⁷

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30 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democrats recognize, and call upon legislators at all
31 levels to uphold the values of a free and vibrant news media, including traditional, digital, and independent
32 media; and

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34 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democrats call upon Washington States’ senators to co-
35 sponsor a media shield law congruent with the Free Flow of Information Act.

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38 Submitted by the Benton County Democratic Platform Committee to the Benton County Democratic Central
39 Committee (Date Submitted 8/05/2018)

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¹ 1st Amendment

² <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23425&LangID=E>

³ <https://pressfreedomtracker.us/>

⁴ <https://www.aclu.org/issues/free-speech/freedom-press/media-protection-laws>

⁵ <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr4382/summary>

⁶ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4382/text>

⁷ <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr4382/summary>