



Senator John Thune  
Chairman, Senate Commerce Committee  
United States Senate SD-511  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce Committee  
United States Senate  
716 Senate Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

July 27, 2017

Dear Senators Thune and Nelson,

The 33 journalism organizations listed below join Senators Maggie Hassan and Tom Udall in urging the Senate Commerce Committee to hold a hearing on the state of media in the United States.

With the 24/7 news cycle, social media, cable news and seemingly endless analysis, Americans are being bombarded by information more than ever before. Our organizations believe an informed public is crucial to our democracy and want to work together to make sure the public has an informed opinion of the press, its role and how to obtain valid information.

We are aware Senators Hassan and Udall, as members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, have sent a letter requesting the Committee hold a hearing on the current state of the media landscape in the United States. The Committee last hosted a hearing on the Future of Journalism in May 2009. We understand that the Committee plays an important role in shaping the environment in which journalism and media exist and in which journalists seek to work safely. With oversight jurisdiction of the Federal Communications Commission's role in broadcast media licensing and communications networks, the Committee is poised to examine the state of independent news, journalism and the broadcast media landscape.

We believe now is the time to reaffirm the importance of a free and unfettered press, which has been a cornerstone of democracy for the past 240 years. Having an open discussion where journalists can talk about their professions, the industry and explain how it all works will hopefully help rebuild trust in a pillar of our democracy, reaffirming to the American people the link between the strength of our nation's democracy and its free press.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. We hope to work with you very soon.

Sincerely,

Society of Professional Journalists  
American Copy Editors Society

American Society of Business Publication Editors  
American Society of Journalists and Authors  
American Society of Magazine Editors  
Arizona Press Club  
Associated Collegiate Press  
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication  
Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication  
Broadcast Education Association  
College Media Association  
Colorado Press Women  
Committee to Protect Journalists  
Education Writers Association  
Government Information Watch  
International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors  
Journalism Education Association  
Local Independent Online News Publishers  
Military Reporters and 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  
Native American Journalists Association  
NewsGuild-CWA  
Online News Association  
Radio Television Digital News Association  
Religion News Association  
Society of Environmental Journalists  
Tully Center for Free Speech

Cc: Senator Maggie Hassan and Senator Tom Udall