



**Society of Professional Journalists**  
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MARCH 22, 2023 — VIA EMAIL

To: House Committee on the Judiciary; House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security; Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Florida members of Congress

CC: Sen. Richard Blumenthal; Sen. Bob Menendez; Rep. Eric Swalwell

**RE: Journalist Protection Act should be reintroduced and passed**

The [Society of Professional Journalists](https://www.spj.org) is submitting this letter on behalf of its over 5,000 members nationwide and journalists across the United States requesting reintroduction of the Journalist Protection Act and increased support in passing it this congressional term.

It has been five years since the Journalist Protection Act was introduced to Congress by Sen. Richard Blumenthal, Sen. Bob Menendez and Rep. Eric Swalwell, and safety for journalists has not improved. It is time for Congress to take a stand and make it a federal crime to knowingly assault a reporter engaging in the act of newsgathering.

Earlier this year, in February, two journalists [were shot](#) while reporting in Florida, leading to the death of 24-year-old Dylan Lyons. At the time, SPJ National President Claire Regan said, “This horrific tragedy underscores the dangers journalists face every minute of every day. Journalists covering war zones are embedded with troops to keep them safe. But journalists covering their own communities don’t have those protections.”

In recent years, journalists have been assaulted at protests, rallies, crime scenes and while reporting in their communities. In 2022, there were [40 assaults](#) on journalists in the United States, according to the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker, and even more journalists were — and continue to be — threatened and harassed each day both in person and online. Not only that, but online violence and harassment [can spur](#) physical attacks.

SPJ has asked for the legislation to be passed in [2018](#), [2019](#) and [2020](#). Each year, it has become even more clear why journalists deserve protection under federal law when newsgathering. Now, we join with other journalism organizations, including the [Radio Television Digital News Association](https://www.rtdna.org), in asking for the Journalist Protection Act to be reintroduced and passed in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Respectfully submitted,

Society of Professional Journalists