

Dear Mr. Ellison:

We are a coalition of current and former journalists, documentary filmmakers, professors, and press freedom and civil liberties organizations and advocates.

We are alarmed by President Donald Trump's recent ban on White House access for CNN, as well as MS NOW and Politico. Trump has also said that he might ban [more](#) news outlets. That could include CBS News, especially if its reporting upsets him. We hope you are alarmed too, as your company, Paramount-Skydance, owns CBS News and seeks to acquire CNN.

Last month, you wrote an [op-ed](#) for the New York Times seeking to assure your critics that you value independent journalism and, despite you and your father Larry's political, financial and social ties to Trump, you could be trusted to operate CNN with integrity and without political meddling. Given [widespread reports](#) that you and your father have promised Trump editorial [concessions](#) in exchange for merger approvals, as well as [numerous other actions](#) that have raised red flags, people are understandably skeptical. That [includes](#) CNN [journalists](#).

This moment is a test of your sincerity. We call on you and Paramount-Skydance to publicly, harshly and immediately condemn Trump's unconstitutional ban on news outlets he dislikes, in violation of decades of precedent protecting the press from content-based punishment, including retaliatory restrictions on their access. We further call on you to publicly commit to fully backing any legal challenge to the illegal ban should you come to own CNN.

CNN, under its current ownership, has already released a [statement](#), as have [MS NOW](#) and [Politico](#), and they've [announced](#) they'll file a lawsuit. Only one of those entities, however, has a parent company seeking to close a transaction in the near future that could steer control of its news operations to friends and political allies of the president.

We need you to make clear that you stand with the reporters, photographers, camera operators, and other journalists you seek to employ, even when their reporting angers the president. If you fail to do so, the only logical conclusion is that your claims to value press freedom, editorial independence and the First Amendment are empty talk and can't be trusted.

Sincerely,

Organizations:

Archival Producers Alliance
Association of American Editorial
Cartoonists
Association of Foreign Press
Correspondents, USA
Chicago Public Square
Coalition For Women In Journalism

Committee for the First Amendment
Committee to Protect Journalists
Common Cause
First Amendment Coalition
First Amendment Foundation
Freedom of the Press Foundation
Free Press
Investigative Studios, Inc.
National Association of Black Journalists

National Press Photographers Association
Partnership for Civil Justice Fund
PEN America
Project Censored
Public Citizen
Radio Television Digital News Association
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
RootsAction
Society of Environmental Journalists
Society of Professional Journalists
The Media and Democracy Project
The NewsGuild-CWA
The Simon and June Li Center for Global Journalism
National Association of Hispanic Journalists

**Journalists, retired
journalists and documentarians:**

Wajahat Ali
Mara Altschuler
Ann Arellano
Ryan Ver Berkmoes
Eliot Brenner
Brian Buchanan
Lisa R. Cohen
Pam Coulter
James Croxton
Ted David
Carl Deal
Walter C Dean
Jim DeRogatis
Bob Dotson
Jonathan Ebinger
Dale Eisman
Andy Field
Jeffrey Fox
Elissa Free
Bob Goldsborough
Gil Gross
Marilyn Heck
Mike Hegedus
Bob Hoenig
Dean Hovell

Dick Hubert
Ed Hula
Sheila S. Hula
Bob Hurley
Amy Goldberg
Michael Kahn
Brad Kornfeld
Frank Kracher
Mark Kramer
Beth Kujawski
Margaret Larson
Bill Lichtenstein
Thomas Loebig
George Merlis
Charlie Meyerson
Susan Miller
Deborah Nelson
Laura Poitras
Jennifer L. Pozner
Bruce Rheins
Barbara Rick
Don Riggs
Bob Ritter
Steve Sbraccia
Mark Scheerer
Tony Scott
Larry Shaw
Jennifer Siebens
Tracy Simmons
Paula Span
Mimi Spillane
Scott Stachowiak
Marianne Keeley Stack
Mardi Tatton
Karla Vallance
Eric Vitale
Maria Zacharias
Stratis Zervos

Academics and advocates:

Ece Algan
Rebecca Biggio
Dr. Bernadette “bird” Bowen

Jennifer Canter
Alan K. Chen
Greg Dobbs
Eric B. Easton
Patricia W. Elliott
Natalie Fenton
Joseph L. Flores, PhD
Daniel C. Hallin
Mickey Huff
Nolan Higdon
Matthew Konerth, PHD
Jonetta L Kurtz
Steve Macek
Gregory P. Magarian
Carlin Meyer
Kiran Nazish
Janice Peck
Victor Pickard
Aziz Rana