

As media outlets that regularly report on newsworthy events, we, the undersigned, vigorously condemn the recent arrests of journalists Don Lemon and Georgia Fort.

Lemon and Fort were arrested after covering a January 18 protest at a church in Minneapolis. They were conducting the constitutionally protected activities of a working journalist: observing, recording and documenting a newsworthy event and attempting to obtain quotes from participants.

Their arrest on charges of allegedly obstructing a place of worship, and even worse, under federal conspiracy law, alarm all of us who believe in the First Amendment and seek to do our jobs without fear of obstruction by law enforcement or retaliation by agents of the government.

The principle of a free press animated the founding of the United States of America 250 years ago, and countless Americans have fought valiantly for it. We cannot allow colleagues to be subjected to spurious and unwarranted arrest for committing acts of journalism.

We call on federal authorities to drop all charges against Lemon and Fort and to publicly affirm their unqualified support for the work of professional journalists in this critical time.

Signatories:

THE CITY

Grist

The 19th

New York magazine, part of Vox Media LLC

The Cityside Journalism Initiative

CalMatters

NY Focus

Epicenter

Documented

The Intercept

Dallas Free Press

Florida Trident

The Jersey Vindicator

Cardinal News

El Paso Matters

Wasau Pilot and Review

Arizona Center for Investigative Reporting

InDepthNH.org

Lookout News

The Xylom

The Lens

ecoRI News

The Providence Eye

San Francisco Public Press

Block Club Chicago

Injustice Watch

South Side Weekly

Invisible Institute

The TRiiBE

La Voz Chicago

New Bedford Light

Vox Populi

The Trace

Center for Investigative Reporting

The Jersey Bee

Capital B

Wisconsin Watch

Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service

San Francisco Public Press

Philadelphia Hall Monitor

The Guardian US

The Journal of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater

The Marshall Project

Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism
FaVS News
East Lansing News