October 13, 2017

Mr. Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We’re writing to urge you to uphold the First Amendment and to publicly refuse to entertain any broadcast-license challenges on the basis of the president’s disapproval of a network’s news coverage.

In the past two days, President Trump has taken to Twitter to attack NBC for critical coverage of his administration and specifically to suggest that the broadcaster’s license might be revoked as punishment.

Coming from a president who has repeatedly referred to the news media as the “enemy of the American people,” these tweets continue a disturbing pattern in this administration to undercut vital press freedoms.

As an independent agency charged with protecting the public interest and overseeing the public airwaves, the FCC must resist any attempts to co-opt the broadcast-licensing process to suit the president’s whims.

Such threats are what you would expect to hear in a dictatorship, not a democracy, and they must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

Above all, the First Amendment declares that the government shall not censor news because it’s critical of the government. We strongly urge you to publicly stand against this administration’s latest assault on press freedom.

Sincerely,

Craig Aaron
Free Press

Jeff Ballou
National Press Club

Charlie Braico
National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians-CWA
Bruce D. Brown
Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

Barbara Cochran
National Press Club Journalism Institute

Brandi Collins
Color Of Change

Michael J. Copps
Former FCC Commissioner
Common Cause

George Freeman
Media Law Resource Center

Delphine Halgand
Reporters Without Borders

Bernie Lunzer
The NewsGuild-CWA

Bryan Mercer
Media Mobilizing Project

Alex Nogales
National Hispanic Media Coalition

Suzanne Nossel
PEN America

Courtney Radsch
Committee to Protect Journalists

Akili-Casundria Ramsess
National Press Photographers Association

Steven Renderos
Center for Media Justice

Chris Shelton
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Trevor Timm
Freedom of the Press Foundation

Gloria Tristani
Former FCC Commissioner

Tom Wheeler
Former FCC Chairman

Beau Willimon
Writers Guild of America, East

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