Media shield was in the news today with multiple editorials published regarding its merits.

Robert Novak's column in the *Washington Post* today .

The bad news last week for conservative Republican Rep. Mike Pence was private confirmation that his proposed law protecting journalists from runaway judges was opposed by President George W. Bush himself, not just inflexible Justice Department lawyers. The good news this week for Pence was an unexpected endorsement by Bush's successor heading the Republican Party, John McCain.

…Journalists generally are not popular with conservative Republicans such as Pence, an evangelical Christian and former chairman of the conservative Republican Study Committee, who challenged the party establishment last year in running for minority leader. Pence summarized his commitment to shield legislation in a two-minute speech he delivered to the House on March 12.

...Pence would like to make that case face to face with Bush. But this president is not easy to see, even for a prominent congressman of his own party, and Pence may have to settle for a senior aide. Nevertheless, Pence is hard to discourage and still wants that meeting to enlist his president in helping Congress pass what supporters say would be its first press freedom legislation since the Bill of Rights. San Francisco Chronicle 's editorial.

The long struggle for a federal law that allows journalists to protect the identity of confidential sources received two significant boosts this week.

The House version, by Rep. Mike Pence, R-Ind., was passed on a 398-21 vote, which suggests enough support to override a potential Bush veto. The endorsement of the three major presidential candidates should serve as a further prod to the Senate to get to work. Americans should not have to wait for the inauguration of a new president for Congress to protect the public's right to know. USA Today 's editorial and a response from Attorney General Michael Mukasey .

The law is needed, quite simply, to ensure that reporters can keep watch on government and other powerful interests. To do that, reporters sometimes need to promise confidentiality to whistle-blowers and others with valuable information; those sources, in turn, need to be able to speak without fear of reprisal.

The House passed a federal shield law last fall, 398-21. The measure, says co-sponsor Mike Pence, R-Ind., one of the most conservative congressmen, "is not about protecting reporters, it's about protecting the public's right to know." A
Senate bill is also gathering bipartisan support.

Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey argues below that a shield law is nnecessary (because information is flowing freely without one) and dangerous (because a new law could undermine all sorts of investigations, including those of terrorism).