

Below are excerpts from Congressman Pence's acceptance speech at the National Newspaper Association/American Society of Newspaper Editor's luncheon:

*Thank you for this award. I am honored to be here today, and it is deeply humbling to accept the 2008 Sunshine in Government Award from the Sunshine in Government Initiative. I also would like to recognize and thank my friend, Congressman Rick Boucher from Virginia. He has been my legislative partner on H.R. 2102, the Free Flow of Information Act, since the beginning, and he is a true champion of the First Amendment and a free and independent press.*

*As a conservative who believes in limited government, I believe that the only check on government power in real time is a free and independent press.*

*One of my most cherished possessions is a letter I received from former New York Times reporter Judith Miller. She wrote to me from the Alexandria Detention Center on July 21, 2005, as she was spending 85 days in prison standing up for the First Amendment. In her letter she welcomed my support for a federal media shield and expressed her hope that a shield law "would not be a liberal/conservative, or Democratic/Republican issue." That hope became a reality when the House of Representatives passed the Free Flow of Information Act on October 16, 2007, by an overwhelming bipartisan margin of 398-21.*

*Freedom is fragile. The Americans in this room should know, we are at a unique moment in the history of this legislative battle. With the House passage of the Free Flow of Information Act and the support of so many influential members of the Senate, I believe we are one floor vote away from restoring the legal foundations of a free and independent press at the national level. I want to commend my many colleagues in the Senate who have championed this bill, especially Senators Richard Lugar, Arlen Specter, Patrick Leahy, Chuck Schumer, Lindsey Graham, and Chris Dodd for their strong leadership. And I welcome the recent cosponsorship of Senator Barak Obama and Senator Hillary Clinton for the Senate version of this bill.*

*As you might expect, I especially welcome the support for a federal media shield bill announced by Senator John McCain yesterday at this convention. He expressed his commitment to the freedom of the press as an "essential right of a free society." Senator McCain's support is of incalculable value and reaffirms his lifelong commitment to limited government and public integrity.*

*I believe there is now a bipartisan majority in the House and the Senate to support this vital legislation and ensure the vitality of the freedom of the press for generations of Americans to come. We just need the Senate to take a vote on the floor, one vote.*

*Ladies and gentlemen, there is no time better than the present, and we must seize upon this moment to pass the Free Flow of Information Act through both Houses of Congress.*

*I am deeply humbled by this recognition, and I rise before you to accept this award in both gratitude and challenge. I am grateful that the Free Flow of Information Act has reached this critical moment, and I am grateful for your help in getting it to this point. But, I challenge you to continue your efforts – let you're the United States Senate know how important this one vote is*

*to the American people. The Free Flow of Information Act is not about protecting reporters, it's about protecting the public's right to know. If you will convey this one message to the American people, we will get our vote on the floor of the Senate and repair this tear in the First Amendment freedom of the press.*