

[President](#) George W. Bush [spoke today](#) at the [2008 National Religious Broadcasters Convention](#) in Nashville, TN. Congressman Mike Pence attended the speech at the invitation of the President.

Below is the portion of the speech pertaining to the so-called "Fairness Doctrine," as well as acknowledgment of [Congressman Pence's work](#) in bringing the [Broadcaster Freedom Act](#) before Congress.

Congressman Pence's release can be found [HERE](#).

"This organization has had many important missions, but none more important than ensuring our airways -- America's airways -- stay open to those who preach the Good News. (Applause.) The very first amendment to our Constitution includes the freedom of speech and the freedom of religion. Founders believed these unalienable rights were endowed to us by our Creator. They are vital to a healthy democracy, and we must never let anyone take those freedoms away. (Applause.)"

"I mention this because there's an effort afoot that would jeopardize your right to express your views on public airways. Some members of Congress want to reinstate a regulation that was repealed 20 years ago. It has the Orwellian name called the Fairness Doctrine. Supporters of this regulation say we need to mandate that any discussion of so-called controversial issues on the public airwaves includes equal time for all sides. This means that many programs wanting to stay on the air would have to meet Washington's definition of balance. Of course, for some in Washington, the only opinions that require balancing are the ones they don't like. (Laughter and applause.)"

"We know who these advocates of so-called balance really have in their sights: shows hosted by people like Rush Limbaugh or James Dobson, or many of you here today. By insisting on so-called balance, they want to silence those they don't agree with. The truth of the matter is, they know they cannot prevail in the public debate of ideas. They don't acknowledge that you are the balance; that you give voice -- (applause.) The country should not be afraid of the diversity of opinions. After all, we're strengthened by diversity of opinions."

"If Congress truly supports the free and open exchange of ideas, then there is a way they can demonstrate that right now. Republicans have drafted legislation that would ban reinstatement of the so-called Fairness Doctrine. Unfortunately, Democratic leaders in the House of Representatives have blocked action on this bill. So in response, nearly every Republican in the House has signed onto what's called a "discharge petition," that would require Congress to hold an up or down vote on the ban. Supporters of this petition are only 24 signatures away."

"I do want to thank Mike Pence, who is with us today, and Congressman Greg Walden, for pressing this effort and defending the right for people to"

express themselves freely. And I urge other members to join in this discharge petition. But I'll tell you this: If Congress should ever pass any legislation that stifles your right to express your views, I'm going to veto it. (Applause.)The full text of the President's remarks is available [HERE](#) .