

Washington, Mar 25 - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence, the co-author of the Free Flow of Information Act, released the following statement praising the House Judiciary Committee for passing the federal media shield legislation (H.R. 985) out of committee and urged a vote before the full House:

"Four years ago, I authored the Free Flow of Information Act with Congressman Rick Boucher of Virginia. The bill, also known as federal media shield legislation, provides a qualified privilege of confidentiality to journalists, enabling them to bring forward information to the public that might otherwise never see the light of day. The bill is not about protecting journalists, it's about protecting the public's right to know.

In October 2007, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Free Flow of Information Act. Unfortunately, the Senate did not pass the legislation before the end of the last Congress. On February 11, 2009, I was pleased to join Congressman Boucher, House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers, Vice Ranking Member Bob Goodlatte and 35 of our colleagues in reintroducing the same legislation that previously garnered 398 votes.

"And with the House Judiciary Committee's action today, we are now one step closer to putting a stitch in this tear in the First Amendment freedom of the press."

"I want to express my profound appreciation to Congressman Boucher, as well as Chairman Conyers, Congressman Goodlatte and Congressman Coble for coming together in a bipartisan way to protect our freedom and proving that freedom is not the business of the Republican Party or the Democrat Party alone, but of every American and every Member of Congress.

"I believe that sufficient bipartisan majorities exist in both the House and the Senate to enact this critical legislation this year. President Obama pledged his support for a federal media shield when he was serving as a U.S. Senator. The time for ensuring the free flow of information is now and I urge its swift consideration by the full House of Representatives."