WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representatives Rick Boucher (D-VA) and Mike Pence (R-IN), co-authors of the Free Flow of Information Act, issued the following statements after the Senate Judiciary Committee approved its version of the legislation, S. 448. This bill would create a federal media shield law to protect reporters from being compelled to reveal their confidential news sources in federal court proceedings. It now awaits consideration before the full Senate.

[Congressman Pence at a 2005 media shield press conference alongside Senator Lugar, Congressman Boucher and Senator Dodd]

"Today's approval by the Senate Judiciary Committee brings us one step closer to enacting the legislation I authored with my colleague Mike Pence, the Free Flow of Information Act. Our legislation appropriately places the public's right to know above the more narrow interest in the administration of justice in a particular federal case. The absence of federal legislation protecting reporters' sources limits the public's access to information which is vital to the functioning of a democratic society. The press allows citizens to serve as watchdogs, speaking out about and exposing what are often illegal, corrupt, or dangerous activities by both private and government actors," Boucher said

"Earlier this year, the House unanimously passed H.R. 985, the Free Flow of Information

Act, which I authored with Rep. Rick Boucher more than four years ago. And today, I am encouraged by the Senate Judiciary Committee's vote to send the federal media shield bill to the floor of the U.S. Senate for consideration. We are one step closer to ensuring for generations to come the vitality of a free and independent press. I commend all of the Senators who have worked so hard on this bill, especially the senior Senator from my home state of Indiana, Senator Richard Lugar, who was an original cosponsor," Pence said.

"We urge our colleagues in the Senate to join the House in quickly passing the Free Flow of Information Act. Together, we will put a stitch in this tear in the First Amendment freedom of the press," they concluded.