

"The First Amendment is not a partisan issue. The preservation of freedom is the paramount duty of every elected representative and should take precedence over partisan politics."

--Congressman Mike Pence

Broadcaster Freedom Act

The Broadcaster Freedom Act, which I am proud to have introduced again this Congress, will ensure that broadcast radio remains free from government censorship by sending the Fairness Doctrine to the ash heap of broadcast history once and for all. The Fairness Doctrine is a 1940's-era policy that mandates competing views be offered on the airwaves on controversial topics. Not until its repeal during the Reagan Administration did religious broadcasters and political personalities on the left and right have the freedom from the federal government to practice their First Amendment rights on the airwaves.

The Broadcaster Freedom Act would forever ban this government regulation of political speech that has no place in the modern broadcasting landscape. Though it has not been enforced since the 1980's, until recently it had not been technically taken off the books. On August 22, 2011, the Federal Communications Commission officially removed the Fairness Doctrine from the Federal Register. While I applaud the FCC for taking this action, I am convinced that the only way to fully ensure that the Fairness Doctrine never returns is for the Broadcaster Freedom Act to become law.

Free Flow of Information Act

As a co-chair for the Congressional Caucus for Freedom of the Press, I have sought not only to protect free speech on the airwaves, but also the public's right to know. That is why I have introduced the Free Flow of Information Act. I firmly believe the only check on government power in real time is a free and independent press. A free press ensures the flow of information to the public, yet over time that freedom has eroded, specifically with regard to the protection of confidential sources.

Compelling reporters to testify and reveal the identity of their confidential sources, other than for national security or certain other reasons, is a detriment to the public interest. Without the promise of confidentiality, many important conduits of information about our government will be closed. The dissemination of information by the media to the public on matters ranging from the workings of our government to events in our local communities is invaluable to the operation of our democracy.

The Free Flow of Information Act has received broad, bipartisan support. In the 110th Congress on October 16, 2007, the bill passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 398-21, and the bill again passed the House in the 111th Congress on March 31, 2009, by voice vote.

Related Articles

{loadposition related_partial}