

RESOLUTION 40

RECOGNIZING THE EXTRAORDINARY WORK OF BROADCAST AND ONLINE JOURNALISTS

Submitted by the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists
Referred to the Resolutions Committee

Every day, somewhere in the world journalists are censored, harassed, threatened, detained, imprisoned or killed.

As a union whose membership includes broadcast and online journalists, SAG-AFTRA champions the rights of a free press, whose primary role is to provide citizens with the information they need to effectively govern a democracy. The First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees these rights, which establishes that the press shall be free from government interference in the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions.

SAG-AFTRA journalist members working in conflict zones from Ukraine and Syria to the West Bank and Black Lives Matter Plaza face immense risks to their safety. As members of the media, they are increasingly the target of heavily politicized efforts to undermine freedom of the press and compromise the principles on which our democratic society rests. Those principles are fundamental to our freedoms, and we must all fight to protect and preserve them.

The AFL-CIO believes first and foremost that citizens in a democracy need the truth. Furthermore, the AFL-CIO believes that journalists have an obligation to seek out the truth and to report it vigorously, to monitor and question those in power, pointing out wrongdoing when they find it, noting when asserted facts are not supported by evidence, and reporting inconsistencies in the positions of public figures.

The AFL-CIO recognizes and celebrates the First Amendment and its provision guaranteeing a free and unencumbered press. The AFL-CIO further reaffirms that journalists are working professional members of the news media with an obligation only to verify the accuracy of what they report, owing loyalty only to their readers, listeners and viewers and not to any political party, government, affiliation or ideology. The AFL-CIO further recognizes that all journalists deserve to practice their craft in a safe environment free from harassment and attacks. In particular, nonmilitary journalists engaged on professional assignments and not engaged in hostile activity who are working in conflict zones have the same status as civilians and should never be the target of police or military attacks.