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Enemy of the People

By [David Chavern](#) February 24, 2017



It's not breaking news that the media is not always popular. It is breaking news that even those who dislike the media are coming to the defense of the journalists and publications in light of recent attacks the Donald Trump administration has launched.

Senator John McCain is not a fan of media, he admitted as much, saying, "I hate the press. I hate you especially. But the fact is, we need you. We need a free press. We must have it. It's vital. If you want to preserve—I'm very serious now—if you want to preserve democracy as we know it, you have to have a free

and, many times, adversarial press. And without it, I'm afraid that we would lose so much of our individual liberties over time. That's how dictators get started."

I do not care if Donald Trump loves or hates the press. I care that he respects the First Amendment and that he acts with dignity.

Recently, in a statement, senior adviser Steve Bannon said "every day is going to be a fight' between the media and the Administration. This is unacceptable that the highest elected office is treating the media like an enemy.

Washington Post editor Marty Baron addressed this rhetoric with, "The way I view it is, we're not at war with the administration, we're at work. We're doing our jobs."

This week President Trump tweeted that members of the media were the "enemy of the American people". This is, frankly, the type of rhetoric usually reserved for terrorists.

The Trump Make America Great Again Committee ("TMAGAC") — a joint fundraising committee composed of Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. ("DJTP") and the Republican National Committee ("RNC") — has sought to raise money through a "survey" that directly disparages media organizations.

In his address to CPAC, President Trump said he wanted to "do something" about the ability of journalists to quote an anonymous source. "Do something" being amending the First Amendment? This type speech is dangerous.

But in a truly baffling and backward move, on Friday afternoon, press secretary Sean Spicer barred CNN, New York Times and Politico from entering a presser. He barred three trusted media organizations from doing their jobs, and millions of Americans from getting the news.

We are in uncharted times. Republicans and Democrats alike are adding their voices in protest to these attacks on the media.

"I've had some rather contentious times with the press," Secretary of Defense General Mattis said in response to a question about whether he saw the media as an enemy. "But no, the press is a constituency — as far as I'm concerned — that we deal with and I don't have any issues with the press, myself."

"The backbone of democracy is a free press and an independent judiciary," Senator Lindsey Graham told CBS host John Dickerson. "And they are worth fighting and dying for."

"Look, we're big boys. We criticize presidents. They want to criticize us back, that's fine," Chris Wallace said Sunday morning on "Fox & Friends." "But when he said that the fake news media is not my enemy, it's the enemy of the American people, I believe that crosses an important line."

Add your voice. The media is not the enemy and we are just doing our jobs.



David Chavern

David Chavern serves as President & CEO of the News Media Alliance. Chavern has built a career spanning 30 years in executive strategic and operational roles, and most recently completed a decade-long tenure at the United States Chamber of Commerce.



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