

## A major attempt to silence us all

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**By Art Parker, Editor**

Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY) are the primary culprits. Unfortunately, they are getting help from some Republicans like Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). The beast they are advancing is the "Free Flow of Information Act," which has advanced out of the Senate Judiciary Committee. It is also known as the Media Shield Bill.

On the surface it sounds good, but it is not. In reality it could be the beginning of the real end of our freedoms and most of all our protection from government.

Those pushing the bill want to see journalists licensed by the federal government under the guise that they would be protected from prosecution from government.

And they want me to be happy with this law? They expect me to believe that they are attempting to pass this law to protect me? I have believed some of the lies they have told me in the past but I will never buy this one. The part about the 'government protecting you'...it is as big as the old lie, 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help.'

Many of you may think this legislation is all about us in the media. No. It is really about you. No one should be forced to get a license to exercise their freedom of speech under the First

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Amendment - no one, EVER. While I often disagree with Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions I am proud of him for leading a stinging counter punch to those who favor this law. Sessions reportedly said, "The freedom of the press does not discriminate amongst groups or individuals—it applies to all Americans. As the Supreme Court has long recognized, it was not intended to be limited to an organized industry or professional journalistic elite."

That's exactly right. It is for us all.

The number one reason it is for us all is to make sure that the people have the right to speak against their government regardless of their positions or parties and ever how harsh their speech may be. Freedom of speech is the most important freedom we have, not just for the media, but for all of us. It is our way to make sure the government belongs to the people and not to those who have been elected or currently hold powerful positions.

This law, if enacted and unless subsequently stricken by the federal courts, will provide government with the worst license of all - the license to control information. It will become the government's censorship tool. It will make it easier for those in power to lie to the people and mislead them. One way this will be done is to make sure that information available is only for those licensed AND in current favor with those in power. Let me explain it this way. The right wingers who love Fox News would be out of luck and out of the loop when a liberal is in power. Those of you left wingers who love MSNBC would be out of luck and out of the loop when a conservative is in power.

The media nailed Nixon. The media exposed Clinton's boyish irresponsibilities in the White House. The media has put away many governors (including one from Alabama) and many other elected officials because the media has been free to fight the war for you, the citizens, the taxpayers.

This great nation was built off of dissent. I have always believed that any politician who wants to limit the media should not be in office for lack of respect of freedom. I believe those in Washington pushing this bogus shield law are spitting upon our Constitution. I've seen it here in Alabama, where politicians want legislation to try and limit the media, or politicians always threatening to sue somebody for what they said. In my opinion those politicians don't want criticism and they don't want to be held accountable. They threaten because they don't want people speaking their minds and opinions. They hate it when they are caught in lies or twisting the truth.

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I got two things to tell those politicians who want to limit our speech: (1) If you are not all that bad or if you have done a good job then the people will vote for you regardless of what the media says, and (2) Shove it.