

By: Representative Banks

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 6

1 A RESOLUTION URGING PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., TO AGREE
2 THAT THE PRESS IS NOT A THREAT TO AMERICA, BUT ONE OF THIS
3 NATION'S GREATEST PROTECTORS OF FREEDOM.

4 WHEREAS, the First Amendment to the United States
5 Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law....abridging
6 the freedom of speech, or of the press..." and, importantly,
7 freedom of the press protects the right to obtain and publish
8 information or opinions without government censorship or fear of
9 punishment, and with a direct link between freedom of the press
10 and a vibrant democracy, citizens are able to obtain information
11 from a variety of sources, form ideas and communicate those ideas
12 to the government; and

13 WHEREAS, an independent press ensures that citizens stay
14 informed about the events surrounding them each day and actions of
15 their government, creating a forum for debate and the open
16 exchange of ideas; and

17 WHEREAS, on an individual level, freedom of the press is a
18 means of participation, the vehicle through which individuals



19 debate the issues of the day, cast their votes, and actively join
20 in the process of decision-making that shapes the nation, and it
21 serves the individual's right to join the political fray, to stand
22 up and be counted and to be an active player in the democracy,
23 instead of only a passive spectator; and

24 WHEREAS, the freedom of the press is critical to a democracy
25 in which the government is accountable to the people, and the
26 transparency that the press brings to important events decreases
27 the risk of corruption and ultimately increases the safety of our
28 nation; and

29 WHEREAS, information uncovered by journalists is often used
30 to shed light on injustice, and responsible news organizations
31 typically operate according to ethical standards, consulting with
32 government officials before releasing sensitive information and
33 refraining from publishing stories that would cause the public
34 more harm than good; and

35 WHEREAS, Americans take great pride in all of their freedoms,
36 and our nation still enjoys press freedoms that many parts of the
37 world lack, such as journalists being threatened with physical
38 harm or death for doing their job, but still, as of 2018, the
39 United States ranks number 45 out of 180 countries on the World
40 Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders, meaning that 44
41 countries, including Ghana, South Africa and Jamaica, have greater
42 press freedom than the United States, whose freedom is enshrined
43 in its most important document; and



44 WHEREAS, freedom of the press is fundamental to democracy in
45 the United States, and because the press is free to report the
46 facts, draw attention to injustice and appeal to the public's
47 conscience, we as a nation are able to combat the serious issues
48 that our nation faces each day:

49 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
50 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
51 urge President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., to agree that the press is
52 not a threat to America, but one of the greatest protectors of
53 this nation's freedom.

54 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
55 furnished to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

