

**Adopting a Resolution to Protect Members of the Free Press as they Exercise their First Amendment Rights to Investigate, Report, and Inform the Public**

Journalists and media workers, like protestors, are protected by the First Amendment from harassment by agents of the government. While members of the press often face danger as they report from war zones, they are granted explicit legal protection to investigate and report on events in the United States. In a chaotic situation, members of the press may still be injured. However, law enforcement agents are specifically prohibited from interfering with, harassing, or attacking journalists and media workers as they report.

Despite this, journalists in Los Angeles County and across the nation have been harmed, harassed, or arrested by law enforcement officers while covering peaceful protests against police brutality in the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery.

MOTION

SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

KUEHL \_\_\_\_\_

HAHN \_\_\_\_\_

BARGER \_\_\_\_\_

**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached resolution that:

1. Asserts that journalists and members of the media can and should exercise their First Amendment right to investigate, report, and inform the public free from interference;
2. Opposes the targeting, harassment, use of excessive force, and arrest of members of the free press by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles Police Department, or any other law enforcement agency in Los Angeles County.

# # #

JH: kc

## **A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES TO PROTECT OUR FREE PRESS FROM HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND VIOLENCE**

WHEREAS, the County of Los Angeles and its residents are protected in their First Amendment right to assemble, and for the press to freely investigate, report and inform the public; and

WHEREAS, our Los Angeles County residents value their constitutional civil rights; and

WHEREAS, the use of excessive force by law enforcement against members of the free press is prohibited at every level of government;

WHEREAS, journalist Cerise Castle documented being shot at with a rubber bullet by officers of the Los Angeles Police Department on Saturday, May 30;

WHEREAS, photojournalist Luis Sinco documented that his camera was destroyed by a rubber bullet by officers of the Los Angeles Police Department on Saturday, May 30;

WHEREAS, Los Angeles journalists Molly Hennessy-Fiske and Carolyn Cole were targeted, shot at with rubber bullets, tear-gassed, and pursued by officers of the Minnesota State Police on Saturday, May 30;

WHEREAS, photojournalist Lexis-Olivier Ray documented an attack with a baton by an officer of the Los Angeles Police Department on Sunday, May 31;

WHEREAS, UCLA student journalist Jintak Han documented being shot at with a rubber bullet by officers of the Los Angeles Police Department on Sunday, May 31;

WHEREAS, reporter Adolfo Guzman-Lopez documented being shot in the neck with a rubber bullet by an officer of the Long Beach Police Department on Sunday, May 31;

WHEREAS, multiple journalists were assaulted by law enforcement officers outside St. John's Church in Washington, D.C. on Monday, June 1;

WHEREAS, journalists across the country have been attacked more than 150 times since May 28, including 125 assaults by law enforcement officers;

WHEREAS, press freedom violations have been documented in more than 50 unique locations across 33 states, including 13 press freedom incidents in Los Angeles;

WHEREAS, the Trump administration has labeled members of the free press as "the enemy of the people" and repeatedly encouraged violence against them;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles that:

1. The Board asserts that journalists and members of the media can and should exercise their First Amendment right to investigate, report, and inform the public free from interference; and
2. The Board opposes the targeting, harassment, use of excessive force, and arrest of members of the free press by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles Police Department, or any other law enforcement agency in Los Angeles County.

The foregoing resolution was on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of June 2020, adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles.

AYES: Supervisors Solis, Ridley-Thomas, Kuehl, Hahn and Barger NOES: NONE ABSTENTIONS: NONE ABSENT: NONE



CELIA ZAVALA  
Executive Officer of the  
Board of Supervisors of the  
County of Los Angeles

By: Maria Obregon  
Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Mary C. Wickham  
County Counsel

By: Mary C. Wickham  
HC