**Supporting a Free Press**

Senator Amy Klobuchar

In Minnesota, we understand the importance of a free press. It’s hard to forget in our state – Minnesotans are among the most engaged citizens in the country. Last year we again ranked first in the nation in voter turnout. Minnesotans volunteer at the second highest rate in the country. And we usually look to our local newspapers as the first stop for the information we need.

In my house growing up, it was impossible to forget the importance of a free press. My dad was a journalist.

As a reporter and a columnist, my dad, Jim Klobuchar, covered it all. On the night of the presidential election in 1960, as a young stringer for the Associated Press, he was among the first in the country - if not *the* first - to call the race for President John F. Kennedy. He was fearless, whether it was reporting from Moscow with a Soviet Intourist guide assigned to him at all times or taking tear gas covering protests outside of a political convention. Digging for the truth was his job. Finding the truth made it all worth it.

From children with cancer to Minnesota veterans, he covered the stories of every day heroes, too. He believed that all stories needed to be told, and that by sharing these stories, we deepen our understanding of one another and become more united as a country.

So, from a very young age, I understood the important role the press has played in our democracy. And today, I understand a free press is as important as ever.

Minnesota reporters have been on the frontlines of major stories since the founding of our first newspaper in 1849. They’ve covered good times and bad. From enlisting with the Union in the Civil War, as *Hastings Democrat* publisher Charles P. Adams did in 1861, to tireless investigating and reporting on the abduction of Jacob Wetterling, Minnesota journalists have always been committed to telling our stories.

Over the past few months, we have heard about “alternative facts.” We have heard an Administration official suggest that the press should “keep its mouth shut.” And we have even seen efforts to limit journalists’ access to elected officials.

None of this is acceptable.

Our founders enshrined freedom of the press in our Constitution for a reason. Thomas Jefferson said that our first objective as a nation should be to leave open “all avenues to truth,” and that the most effective way of doing that is through “the freedom of the press.”

Today, Minnesota reporters continue their dogged pursuit of the truth day after day, story after story. That reporting is on display all across Minnesota, and the Minnesota Newspaper Association has played a big part in supporting Minnesota reporters for 150 years now. From Deborah Howell, who oversaw the Pioneer Press’s first Pulitzer Prize, to Mark Kellogg, the first Associated Press reporter to die in the line of duty, reporters all across our state are carrying forward a remarkable legacy.

I’m determined to protect journalists and defend freedom of the press. My dad expects me to. The oath I took to “support and defend the Constitution” demands that I do.

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