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Senator John Thune
Chairman, Senate Commerce Committee
United States Senate SD-511
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce Committee
United States Senate
716 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

July 27, 2017

Dear Senators Thune and Nelson,

The 30 journalism organizations listed below join Senators Maggie Hassan and Tom Udall in urging the Senate Commerce Committee to hold a hearing on the state of media in the United States.

With the 24/7 news cycle, social media, cable news and seemingly endless analysis, Americans are being bombarded by information more than ever before. Our organizations believe an informed public is crucial to our democracy and want to work together to make sure the public has an informed opinion of the press, its role and how to obtain valid information.

We are aware Senators Hassan and Udall, as members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, have sent a letter requesting the Committee hold a hearing on the current state of the media landscape in the United States. The Committee last hosted a hearing on the Future of Journalism in May 2009. We understand that the Committee plays an important role in shaping the environment in which journalism and media exist and in which journalists seek to work safely. With oversight jurisdiction of the Federal Communications Commission's role in broadcast media licensing and communications networks, the Committee is poised to examine the state of independent news, journalism and the broadcast media landscape.

We believe now is the time to reaffirm the importance of a free and unfettered press, which has been a cornerstone of democracy for the past 240 years. Having an open discussion where journalists can talk about their professions, the industry and explain how it all works will hopefully help rebuild trust in a pillar of our democracy, reaffirming to the American people the link between the strength of our nation's democracy and its free press.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. We hope to work with you very soon.

Sincerely,

Society of Professional Journalists
American Copy Editors Society

American Society of Business Publication Editors
American Society of Journalists and Authors
American Society of Magazine Editors
Arizona Press Club
Associated Collegiate Press
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication
College Media Association
Colorado Press Women
Committee to Protect Journalists
Education Writers Association
Government Information Watch
International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors
Journalism Education Association
Local Independent Online News Publishers
Military Reporters and Editors
National Association of Black Journalists
National Association of Hispanic Journalists
National Federation of Press Women
National Press Photographers Association
National Scholastic Press Association
National Writers Union
Native American Journalists Association
Online News Association
Radio Television Digital News Association
Religion News Association
Society of Environmental Journalists
Tully Center for Free Speech

Cc: Senator Maggie Hassan and Senator Tom Udall