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September 29, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem,

As the son of a journalist and staunch defender of press freedoms, I write to express my opposition to the rule proposed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to reduce the amount of time foreign journalists can work in the United States. This rule would stifle meaningful reporting, chill press freedoms, diminish our global influence, and waste government resources on unnecessary bureaucratic processes. Moving forward with such a proposal may also risk provoking retaliatory actions against American journalists who work abroad. For all these reasons, I urge your Department to abandon this effort.

The current policy allows foreign journalists to stay in the United States for the duration of up to five years to complete their work engagements. The current “duration of stay” framework enables journalists to develop a deep understanding of the American government, people, culture, and economy, which allows journalists to provide consistent and accurate reporting of U.S. affairs to their global audiences. This reporting enables international dialogue that allows the United States to make progress overseas on matters of security, trade, commerce, and more.

On August 28, 2025, DHS proposed a harsh rule to limit the stay of foreign journalists to 240 days, and only 90 days for nationals of the People’s Republic of China. This short and fixed timeline impedes the journalistic activity our visa framework originally intended to support. Reporters have sounded the alarm that 240 days is not enough time to conduct meaningful, in-depth reporting on complex, ongoing, or evolving stories. This rule would prevent critical investigative journalism by foreign journalists and stifle coverage for global audiences.

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If journalists need to stay beyond 240 days, the proposed rule requires them to apply for an extension and have their applications reviewed by DHS. This change forces journalists to clear bureaucratic hurdles every eight months and deal with uncertainty every time a renewal deadline approaches. These burdens limit journalists' abilities to effectively do their jobs. The rule would drastically increase the paperwork and case volume at DHS, at a time when the Department already faces backlogs pertaining to extensions and work authorizations. The proposed rule requires journalists to file their extensions with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) agency for immigration officers to review. Currently, USCIS has over 11.3 million pending cases, the largest in its history. This case backlog is already delaying the issuance of work authorizations across important industries facing workforce shortages, like agriculture and healthcare, and adding more paperwork to this backlog will only delay extensions for journalists. Journalists may end up seeing a lapse in their visa before a determination is reached by DHS.

There is also no reliable evidence of widespread abuse or noncompliance by foreign journalists on these visas. Applicants are already thoroughly vetted, ensuring only legitimate foreign media representatives enter the United States. There will be no added security benefits to repeating background checks that have already been performed by the U.S. Government in the original admission of a foreign journalist.

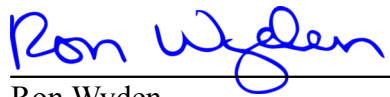
Most concerning, I fear that DHS will use this rule to restrict the extension of journalists' visas to only those the Trump administration deems as providing politically favorable media coverage. If anyone in the Trump administration disapproves of a journalist's coverage, this policy makes it easier for them to face retaliation and have their application denied. Such actions would have a chilling effect on press freedoms, and lead journalists to self-censor any critical reporting, which is detrimental to any democracy. These implications are inconsistent with the First Amendment of the Constitution, and American values.

My concerns stem from the Trump administration's recent actions. The Trump administration has already retaliated against people for their reporting and expression. Richard Grenell, former U.S. ambassador to Germany and close associate of President Trump, threatened to have a German correspondent's visa revoked after speaking about Trump's deputy chief of staff, Stephen Miller, on a podcast. In March, DHS detained and tried to remove Rümeyza Öztürk, a Turkish national, who wrote an op-ed in her campus newspaper critical of Israel's war. In June, Mario Guevara, a Salvadoran national and prominent journalist who covered immigrant communities, was arrested and detained while covering a protest in Atlanta, Georgia; he still remains in detention despite all charges against him being dropped.

DHS must recognize that adopting such a rule may invite foreign governments to enact similar policies, which will lead to the censorship of American journalists abroad and jeopardize our own access to coverage in foreign markets. In the absence of reporting by talented American journalists, our adversaries will find it easier to disseminate state-sponsored propaganda and undermine our influence abroad.

I urge your Department to critically evaluate my concerns and those raised by reporters and reputable press freedom advocates across the country, and abandon the promulgation of this proposed rule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Wyden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" and last name "Wyden" clearly distinguishable. It is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator