Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

First Amendment, U.S. Constitution

Don't Take Our Word For It:
A Free Press Matters

1789

"[W]ere it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

Thomas Jefferson, 1789

1864

"Let [the people] know the truth and the country is safe."

Abraham Lincoln, 1864

1961

"Without debate, without criticism, no Administration and no country can succeed--and no republic can survive…. And that is why our press was protected by the First Amendment--the only business in America specifically protected by the Constitution ... to inform, to arouse, to reflect, to state our dangers and our opportunities, to indicate our crises and our choices, to lead, mold, educate and sometimes even anger public opinion."

John F. Kennedy, 1961

2017

"I consider the media to be indispensable to democracy. We need an independent media to hold people like me to account. Power can be very addictive, and it can be corrosive, and it's important for the media to call to account people who abuse their power."

Former President George W. Bush, 2017

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