

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 9, 2026

The Honorable Laurie Jinkins
Speaker
State of Washington House of Representatives
339C Legislative Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA, 98504

Speaker Jinkins:

We write to you expressing our strong opposition to the Washington House of Representatives' decision to deny press passes for independent journalists Ari Hoffman, Brandi Kruse, and Jonathan Choe. These denials are a blatant violation of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and its protection of the freedom of the press.

Our Founding Fathers designed a system of governance that allows any citizen to publicly question our government. The First Amendment exists to prevent discrimination and punishment of the press for the views, thoughts, or words in their coverage. The job of the press is to agitate, investigate, and scrutinize our leaders and institutions, which distinguishes democracy from dictatorship.

It is truly baffling and troubling that we find ourselves today addressing such clear violations of these bedrock principles. In this era of polarization and one-party control of all branches of government in the State of Washington, it is vital that independent journalists have the ability to ask difficult questions and hold elected officials accountable.

We request that the House of Representatives immediately reverse this decision, issue press passes to these journalists, restore their ability to take part in the democratic process, and hold their government accountable.

Regards,



Dan Newhouse (WA-04)
Member of Congress



Michael Baumgartner (WA-05)
Member of Congress

CC: Bernard Dean - Chief Clerk of the State of Washington House of Representatives