

biological corridors, NREPA connects the region's core wildlands into a functioning ecological whole. NREPA also creates jobs by putting people to work restoring the land in wildland restoration and recovery areas designated in the bill.

Finally, I want to be very clear about what NREPA doesn't do. NREPA does not impact private landowners. It impacts only federal public lands—lands owned by all Americans.

Some years ago, two NREPA supporters from Manhattan, Montana wrote to me and said "We feel that there is a little ray of hope for the incredible but dwindling wildlands we are so lucky to live near and love." All of us have a responsibility to sustain that hope.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, February 10, 2009, I was not present for six recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way: roll No. 54—"yea"; roll No. 55—"yea"; roll No. 56—"yea"; roll No. 57—"nay"; roll No. 58—"yea"; roll No. 59—"yea."

FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION ACT OF 2009

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, in October 2007, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Free Flow of Information Act, legislation that would provide a qualified privilege to journalists to shield confidential sources from compelled disclosure by a federal court. I am pleased to join over 30 of my colleagues today in reintroducing that same legislation that previously garnered 398 votes here on the House floor. Today, we take up the mantle and renew the push to make this bill law.

I am honored to be joined by my distinguished colleague Congressman RICK BOUCHER, who is such a tireless advocate for the First Amendment. Also, we are pleased to have Chairman CONYERS and Reps. COBLE, WALDEN, BLUNT, GOODLATTE, LOFGREN, WEXLER, YARMUTH and many others as original cosponsors. This is truly a bipartisan issue. It is a First Amendment issue, and I thank these Members for their leadership. They are truly champions for a free press.

Enshrined in the First Amendment are these words: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."

As a conservative who believes in limited government, I know the only check on government power in real time is a free and independent press. The Free Flow of Information Act is not about protecting reporters; it is about protecting the public's right to know. Our Founders did not enshrine the freedom of the press in the Constitution because they got good press. And, I am certainly not advocating

a free and independent press because I always get good press.

We all remember when not long ago a confidential source brought to light abuses at the highest levels of government in the long national nightmare of Watergate. History records that W. Mark Felt never would have come forward without the assurance made to him of confidentiality.

But, thirty-plus years later the press cannot make that assurance to sources, and we face the real danger that there may never be another Deep Throat. The protections provided by the Free Flow of Information Act are necessary so that members of the media can bring forward information to the American public without fear of retribution or prosecution.

In recent years, we have famously seen reporters such as Judith Miller jailed and David Ashenfelter, Mark Fainaru-Wada and Lance Williams threatened with jail sentences. They are a few names among many who have been subpoenaed for taking a stand for the First Amendment and refusing to reveal confidential sources.

Compelling reporters to testify, and in particular, compelling them to reveal the identity of their confidential sources, is a detriment to the public interest. Without the promise of confidentiality, many important conduits of information about our government will be shut down. The dissemination of information by the media to the public on matters ranging from the operation of our government to events in our local communities is invaluable to the operation of our democracy. Without the free flow of information from sources to reporters, the public is ill-equipped to make informed decisions.

Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia have various statutes that protect reporters from being compelled to testify or disclose sources and information in court. Thirteen states have protections for reporters as a result of judicial decisions. The Free Flow of Information Act would set national standards similar to those that are in effect in the states.

The Free Flow of Information Act closely follows existing Department of Justice guidelines for issuing subpoenas to members of the news media. It simply makes the guidelines mandatory and provides protection against compelled disclosure of confidential sources. In doing so, this legislation strikes a balance between the public interest in the free flow of information against the public interest in compelling testimony in highly limited circumstances such as situations involving grave risk to national security or imminent threat of bodily harm.

Abraham Lincoln said, "Give the people the facts and the Republic will be saved." The Free Flow of Information Act is designed to ensure that the American people have the facts that they need to make choices as an informed electorate.

A free and independent press is the only agency in America that has complete freedom to hold government accountable. Integrity in government is not a Democratic or Republican issue, and corruption cannot be laid at the feet of one party. When scandal hits either party, any branch of government, or any institution in our society, it wounds our nation.

As a conservative, I believe that concentrations of power should be subject to great scrutiny. The longer I serve in Congress, the more firmly I believe in the wisdom of our Found-

ers—especially as it pertains to the First Amendment and freedom of the press. It is imperative that we preserve the transparency and integrity of American government, and the only way to do that is by preserving a free and independent press.

Thomas Jefferson warned that, "Our liberty cannot be guarded but by the freedom of the press, nor that limited without danger of losing it."

This Congress would be wise to take those words to heart. Now is the time to heed the advice of Mr. Jefferson.

I believe there are bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate sufficient to enact this bill this year. President Obama pledged his support for a federal media shield during his service in the Senate.

With the bipartisan support of my colleagues in Congress and the President, I believe the time has come to stitch this tear in the First Amendment freedom of the press.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, on February 10, 2009, I was unavoidably detained and was not able to record my vote for rollcall Nos. 54–56.

Had I been present I would have voted: rollcall No. 54—"yes"—On Motion to Instruct Conferees; rollcall No. 55—"yes"—Supporting the goals and ideals of "National Girls and Women in Sports Day"; rollcall No. 56—"yes"—Recognizing and commending University of Oklahoma quarterback Sam Bradford for winning the 2008 Heisman Trophy and for his academic and athletic accomplishments.

EARMARK REFORM

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, on January 28, 2009, I introduced a resolution, H. Res. 100, to amend the Rules of the House of Representatives to provide for earmark reform. The bill that I introduced will not only promote accountability and transparency in Congress, but push its Members in a direction that better serves their constituents.

All too frequently, Congressional spending requests are funding embarrassing and unworthy projects. This institution has lost credibility because earmarks fund "monuments-to-me," bizarre private enterprises, or even projects to subsidize their family. This growing trend is unacceptable and, as guardians of taxpayer dollars, we owe it to the citizens of the United States to be good stewards of their money.

Congressional spending requests deserve to be scrutinized and publicly debated, that is why I introduced this commonsense approach to reform the earmark process. This resolution will prohibit earmarks from being used for non-public entities, except for institutions of higher education. Likewise, this bill will prohibit any earmark for any entity named after an individual serving in Congress, which will eliminate controversial "monuments-to-me."