111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To highlight and promote freedom of the press worldwide.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. SCHIFF introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To highlight and promote freedom of the press worldwide.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Daniel Pearl Freedom

of the Press Act of 2009”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Acts of violence against journalists and
media personnel continue to rise in frequency, with
very few of the attacks resulting in prosecution.
(2) According to the 2008 Annual Report by the Committee to Protect Journalists, in 2008 at least 41 journalists were killed in connection with their work, and 125 were imprisoned.

(3) Reflecting the rise in influence of Internet reporting, an increasing number of online editors, bloggers, and web-based reporters are being imprisoned and websites are being closed because of official censorship.

(4) The United States and the international community agree that the safety and independence of journalists and the media are a matter of pressing international concern. On December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to—

(1) highlight and promote the work and accomplishments of journalists and media organizations
that promote freedom of opinion and expression worldwide;

(2) draw attention to the conditions in countries in which journalists are killed, imprisoned, kidnapped, threatened, or censored;

(3) offer protection for these individuals and media organizations by identifying to the international community those countries where journalists are at the highest risk; and

(4) emphasize the significance of including freedom of the press as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a factor in United States foreign policy.

SEC. 3. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PROMOTION OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WORLDWIDE.

(a) REPORT.—The Secretary of State shall annually submit to Congress a report regarding the promotion of freedom of the press worldwide. The report shall be entitled the “Annual Report on the Status of Freedom of the Press Worldwide”.

(b) PREPARATION.—The Secretary shall prepare the Annual Report with the assistance of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

(c) CONTENTS.—The Annual Report shall contain the following information:
(1) A description of the status of freedom of
the press in each country, including initiatives in
favor of freedom of the press and efforts to improve
or preserve, as appropriate, the independence of the
media, together with an assessment of progress
made as a result of those efforts.

(2) An identification of countries in which there
were violations of freedom of the press, including di-
rect physical attacks, imprisonment, indirect sources
of pressure, and censorship by governments, mili-
tary, intelligence, or police forces, criminal groups,
or armed extremist or rebel groups.

(3) In countries where there are particularly se-
vere violations of freedom of the press, the annual
report shall address the following:

(A) Whether government authorities of
each such country participate in, facilitate, or
condone such violations of the freedom of the
press.

(B) What steps the government of each
such country has taken to preserve the safety
and independence of the media, and to ensure
the prosecution of those individuals who attack
or murder journalists.
(d) ORGANIZATION.—The Annual Report shall be organized in three parts, as follows:

(1) Part I shall consist of the identification of countries (and the associated assessment of their efforts) under subsection (c)(1).

(2) Part II shall consist of the identification of countries (and the associated assessment of their efforts) under subsection (c)(2).

(3) Part III shall consist of the identification of countries (and the associated assessment of their efforts) under subsection (c)(3).

(e) TIME FOR SUBMISSION.—The Secretary shall submit the Annual Report on May 3 of each year, declared by the United Nations General Assembly as World Press Freedom Day, or the first day thereafter on which either House of Congress is in session.

(f) UNCLASSIFIED FORM.—The Annual Report shall be submitted in unclassified form.

SEC. 4. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall administer a grant program with the aim of promoting freedom of the press worldwide. The grant program shall be administered by the Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor as part of the Human Rights Democracy Fund (HRDF).
(b) Amounts and Time.—Grants may be awarded to nonprofit and international organizations in amounts ranging from $70,000 to $150,000 annually. Grants may span multiple years, up to five years.

(c) Purpose.—Grant proposals should promote and broaden press freedoms by strengthening the independence of journalists and media organizations, promoting a legal framework for freedom of the press, or through providing regionally and culturally-relevant training and professionalization of skills to meet international standards in both traditional and digital media.


There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State $2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2010 to 2014 to carry out this Act.

SEC. 6. Definitions.

In this Act:


(2) Media Organization.—The term “media organization” means a group or organization that gathers and disseminates news and information to the public (through any medium of mass commun-
communication) in a foreign country in which the group or organization is located, except that the term does not include a group or organization that is primarily an agency or instrumentality of the government of such foreign country. The term includes an individual who is an agent or employee of such group or organization who acts within the scope of such agency or employment.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of State.