



White House News Photographers Association

Susan Walsh
President, WHNPA
7119 Ben Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044
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Mr. Dan Bartlett
Counselor to the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Bartlett,

In an effort to establish a discussion with you and the White House, I would like to bring up a very important issue for the White House News Photographers Association. We are hopeful that you will understand and help address some of our concerns.

The WHNPA is troubled by the increasing number of photo releases from events involving the President of the United States. Each day, WHNPA members stand ready to document the important work of the President, his Cabinet and Congress. Limiting our access to these events is a disservice to the public here in Washington and around the world. WHNPA members, both still and video, bring their unique vision, skill and journalistic ethic to every assignment. However, we are quickly losing our ability to independently gather the news, especially at the White House.

At the WHNPA dinner, President Bush said, "One photo may not tell us the entire truth, but it gives us a piece of the truth. One photo may not provide a complete history, but it gives us a glimpse of history and that's important work." Our mission statement declares, "The WHNPA strongly believes in the public's natural and legal right to freedom in searching for the truth and the right to be accurately and completely informed about the world in which we live." However, a White House photo release, no matter how accurate the image, provides only one perspective --one that is carefully screened and approved.

Therefore, the WHNPA plans to initiate discussions with top decision makers at national and international news organizations regarding this matter. We will strongly encourage these new organizations to significantly limit their use and distribution of these photo releases.

The free press provides the public with a broad range of views and perspectives documenting the significant work of the President of the United States. WHNPA members, since our inception in 1921, have been and continue to be, "The Eyes of History." The public deserves that these eyes remain wide open. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you this very important issue.

I look forward to speaking with you in the near future. Please feel free to contact me at 202-365-2661 or at the above address.

Respectfully,

Susan Walsh
President, WHNPA