

# SPJ News Release



Wednesday, July 30, 2008

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For Immediate Release

## **SPJ disappointed that shield law stalls in Senate**

INDIANAPOLIS – Leaders of the Society of Professional Journalists are disappointed in the Senate’s vote today that stalled S. 2035, the Senate version of the Free Flow of Information Act, also known as the federal media shield law.

Today’s vote failed to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed after receiving only 51 of the necessary 60 votes. The 43 senators, mostly Republican, who voted against cloture cited a pending energy bill they wanted to amend to allow for increased domestic oil and gas production.

“We are very disappointed that the bill stalled today,” SPJ President Clint Brewer said. “SPJ will continue to encourage its members and public citizens to contact members of Congress and express part of the Society’s mission: to encourage a climate where journalism can be practiced freely. A federal shield law would be a major step toward that goal.”

The Society and its leaders encourage journalists across the country to contact their senators and voice their support for the bill. Contact information can be found at Senate.gov ([http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)).

To see a list of those who voted against bringing the bill to the Senate floor for a vote, see the roll call ([http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=2&vote=00191](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=2&vote=00191)).

A federal shield law would give journalists the right to refuse to reveal information and sources obtained during the newsgathering process with a few notable exceptions, including where national security is at issue. The qualified privilege would be similar to those afforded to lawyers and their clients, clergy and their penitents, and psychotherapists and their patients.

Forty-nine states have common-law, statutory or rule-based protections in place to shield journalists and their confidential sources from compelled testimony.

Founded in 1909 as Sigma Delta Chi, the Society of Professional Journalists promotes the free flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry; works to inspire and educate the next generation of journalists; and protects First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press. For further information about SPJ, please visit [www.spj.org](http://www.spj.org).

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