

FREE JOSH WOLF COALITION

Statement from Liz Wolf For Reporters Without Borders Press Conference, 2/1/07

I am Liz Wolf-Spada, the mother of imprisoned journalist, Josh Wolf. I am so sorry I cannot be there today in person. I want to thank Lucie Morillon and Reporters Without Borders for their diligence and faithfulness in following the story of my son's ordeal and imprisonment since the beginning.

Ironically, as my son faces his 160th day of imprisonment as a journalist who is not cooperating with a federal grand jury investigation, I am teaching the California social studies curriculum to my third grade class. We are learning about the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights. This is a FAST FACT quote from our textbook.

"Freedom of the press is the right of United States citizens to write, read and speak freely. Today, the press includes not only newspapers and magazines, but films, television and the internet."

How difficult it is for me to teach my class to believe that we have a free press, when I see that we do not. From Judith Miller to Lance Williams and Mark Fainaru-Wadu to my son, Josh Wolf, the federal government no longer seems to recognize the rights of us, the citizens, to benefit from your open, unbiased and unhindered reporting.

When independent journalists such as my son, are imprisoned for refusing to turn over unpublished material and testify about people exercising free speech rights at an anti-war, anti-G8 summit protest in San Francisco, it certainly has a chilling effect on what may or may not be filmed and reported to the public. Who wants to report controversial news knowing that their reporting could lead to months of imprisonment for standing by journalistic principles?

Josh is one of many young journalists who use words and video to tell the story of what they see happening in the world around them. For most of them,

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the internet is the chosen vehicle to publish this information. For many people today, young and old, it is also a major source of news. Recently, I attended the Free Press, Reform the Media Conference in Memphis. I was there to speak about Josh's case. There were 3500 people there, people who care about protecting the rights of you, the press, so that you can protect our rights to be informed citizens. Josh is on the crest of the wave of a media revolution and he is in prison. What does that say about our countries commitment to a free press?

The highlights for me at that conference were the chance to meet and speak with two very special people, Mr. Dennis Kucinich and Ms. Helen Thomas. So if either of you are there, thank you, and I hope I will have a chance to meet with some of you next week when I will be coming to DC.