



SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS.
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Dear Dana Bash, Jake Tapper and Illa Calderon,

Congratulations on your role in the upcoming presidential candidates' debate on Sunday night.

As the nation's most broad-based journalism organization, the Society of Professional Journalists urges you to ask questions about press freedom and specifically the restraints built up over years on journalists talking federal employees without reporting to "censors," called PIOs (or public information officers).

We suggest this question:

"Under the Trump administration, the Obama administration and administrations before that, many federal agencies have banned staff members from speaking directly to the press or required them to speak only with or through public information officers. At a time when it's essential that the American public hear directly from scientists and disease specialists, will you stop this across-the-board information control and support the First Amendment rights of journalists?"

Please note that current restrictions are unconstitutional, according to a recent extensive legal analysis. For more information, read our recent press release, ["Review of legal cases says much of 'media policy' censorship is illegal."](#)

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Gallagher Newberry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patricia Gallagher Newberry
National President
Society of Professional Journalists