

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4808

To protect the independence of journalists by preventing undue political
influence at the United States Agency for Global Media.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 19, 2020

Mr. MURPHY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred
to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To protect the independence of journalists by preventing
undue political influence at the United States Agency
for Global Media.

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

3 **SECTION 1. NONINTERFERENCE STANDARDS FOR UNITED**
4 **STATES INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING.**

5 Section 303(a) of the United States International
6 Broadcasting Act of 1994 (22 U.S.C. 6202(a)) is amend-
7 ed—

8 (1) in paragraph (7), by striking “and” at the
9 end;

1 (2) in paragraph (8), by striking the period at
2 the end and inserting “; and”; and

3 (3) by adding at the end the following:

4 “(9) expect noninterference from other United
5 States Government agencies or officials with respect
6 to its journalists, particularly any investigation into
7 the private political views expressed by its journal-
8 ists.”.

9 **SEC. 2. RESPONSIBILITY OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO**
10 **PROTECT JOURNALISTS AND OTHER EM-**
11 **PLOYEES FROM UNDUE INFLUENCE AND AD-**
12 **VERSE ACTIONS BASED ON EXPRESSION OF**
13 **POLITICAL VIEWS.**

14 Section 305(b) of the United States International
15 Broadcasting Act of 1994 (22 U.S.C. 6204(b)) is amend-
16 ed—

17 (1) in the subsection heading, by inserting
18 “AND JOURNALISTS” after “BROADCASTERS”;

19 (2) by striking “the Board” each place such
20 term appears and inserting “the United States
21 Agency for Global Media”;

22 (3) by striking “shall respect” and inserting the
23 following: “shall—

24 “(2) respect”; and

1 (4) by striking the period at the end and insert-
 2 ing a semicolon; and

3 (5) by adding at the end the following:

4 “(2) protect United States Agency for Global
 5 Media journalists from any undue interference from
 6 United States Government agencies or officials; and

7 “(3) ensure that United States Agency for
 8 Global Media employees are judged solely on the
 9 basis of their adherence to professional standards of
 10 broadcast journalism in the course of their work.”.

11 **SEC. 3. INVESTIGATION OF INFRINGEMENTS TO JOUR-**
 12 **NALIST INDEPENDENCE BY THE INSPECTOR**
 13 **GENERAL.**

14 Section 310A of the United States International
 15 Broadcasting Act of 1994 (22 U.S.C. 6209) is amended—

16 (1) in subsection (a), by striking “Broadcasting
 17 Board of Governors” and inserting “United States
 18 Agency for Global Media”; and

19 (2) by adding at the end the following:

20 “(c) INVESTIGATION OF INFRINGEMENTS TO JOUR-
 21 NALIST INDEPENDENCE.—The Inspector General of the
 22 Department of State and the Foreign Service shall, in the
 23 course of his or her duties, investigate any potential in-
 24 fringements to journalistic independence by United States
 25 Agency for Global Media senior officials or other Federal

1 officials, including informal and formal attempts to influ-
2 ence the content of broadcasts or to exert pressure on
3 journalists.”.

