



CHARLES D. LAVINE
Assemblyman 13th District

CHAIR
Judiciary Committee

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Codes
Ethics & Guidance
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Insurance

June 18, 2025

Honorable. Eric Adams
New York City Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Via Electronic Mail

Re: Chris Sommerfeldt

Dear Mayor Adams,

I am deeply disturbed to read in the New York Times that you have taken the extraordinary step of barring Daily News reporter Chris Sommerfeldt from future City Hall news conferences. This action, because in your opinion he was being disrespectful, is a clear violation of American constitutional values.

Every year since 2019, I have sponsored a resolution in the Assembly recognizing Press Freedom Day in the state of New York. The original resolution states, "Journalists and media workers from New York State and around the world should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State for their essential role in promoting government accountability, defending democratic activity, and strengthening civil society, despite threats to the safety of those journalists and media workers; *it is important they are able to do their job without fear or repercussions.*" It's that last part which I draw your attention to. In this instance, you are no better than President Trump who has treated the press as his enemy since his first term – going so far in his second as to bar reporters he doesn't agree with from White House events and using favoritism to determine seating and recognition in official press conferences.

The resolution also mentions many journalists from our great state who have given their lives while doing their job, including one from my district. Marie Colvin, an award-winning reporter from Oyster Bay was murdered in 2012 while covering the Syrian Civil War. She was specifically targeted because of her profession, for the purpose of silencing those reporting on the growing opposition movement in the country.

There is good reason the founding fathers chose to include the guarantee of a free press in the First Amendment, as it would always stand as a check against unlimited power by any one individual or governmental body. I strongly urge you to consider this reminder of one of the most fundamental aspects of our democracy and reverse the action taken here against Mr. Sommerfeldt.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles D. Lavine".

Charles Lavine