

Oct. 8, 2025

## STATEMENT

The Pentagon Press Association has been cautious with our public statements since the Defense Department first announced it would force reporters to make a choice: sign onto rules creating unprecedented restrictions on our ability to report the news, or end our historically-held access to the Pentagon.

This caution was meant to support efforts to negotiate revisions to the document the Defense Department is requiring our members to sign to secure new credentials, in place of valid badges that are being taken away – the kind we’ve always worn.

Unfortunately, those negotiations have not been as successful as we had hoped.

We acknowledge and appreciate that the Pentagon is no longer requiring reporters to express agreement with the new policy as a condition for obtaining press credentials. But the Pentagon is still asking us to affirm in writing our “understanding” of policies that appear designed to stifle a free press and potentially expose us to prosecution for simply doing our jobs.

The new credentialing policy also leaves open the threat of the Department of Defense revoking credentials for reporters who exercise their First Amendment rights by seeking information that hasn’t been pre-approved for formal release, even when the information is entirely unclassified. The policy conveys an unprecedented message of intimidation to everyone within the DoD, warning against any unapproved interactions with the press and even suggesting it’s criminal to speak without express permission -- which plainly, it is not.

We were also surprised and disturbed to learn through the new policy statement that the Pentagon plans to move all of our news organizations from our dedicated workspaces. While we don’t know the location to which the Pentagon is preparing to move the press corps, we can surmise from restrictions imposed earlier this year that the changes will further isolate reporters, making it harder to interact even with the spokespeople inside the Pentagon who are entrusted to approve information for public release.

Let's be clear about the facts. Pentagon reporters have always worn badges, and continue to do so to this day. Pentagon reporters have always been restricted to unclassified spaces only- the idea that reporters have been prowling in offices where they are not allowed is simply preposterous. And reporters have a constitutional right to ask questions. Every political administration going back to Eisenhower -- including the first Trump administration -- has allowed the same level of access. This press access has never precipitated the kind of national security crisis feared by the current leadership of the department.

Limiting the media's ability to report on the U.S. military fails to honor the American families who have entrusted their sons and daughters to serve in it, or the taxpayers responsible for giving the department hundreds of billions of dollars a year. The American people deserve to know how their military is being run. They deserve more information from this administration, not less.

We hope the Pentagon reconsiders.