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Reporters Committee Hotline provides free 24-hour legal aid to journalists covering the 2012 Democratic National Convention

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press has arranged with the media law firm of McGuireWoods LLP to coordinate *pro bono* legal assistance to reporters covering the 2012 Democratic National Convention through a 24-hour hotline. Volunteer attorneys will be available to advise reporters who are arrested or experience other problems with law enforcement while covering the convention, the political protests or related events.

The hotline will be in operation from Friday, August 31, 2012 through the end of the convention. The main phone number is (704) 343-2063; backup numbers are (704) 904-5834 and (919) 428-5883. You may also call the regular hotline operated by the Reporters Committee at (800) 336-4243. The attorneys responding to calls will include Jonathan Buchan and J. Curtis Griner.

BE PREPARED. Disturbances occurring at political conventions in the past sometimes have resulted in mass arrests during which reporters have been taken into custody. The hotline is part of the Reporters Committee's effort to address problems experienced by reporters as a result of undue restrictions on access or while covering demonstrations and other events occurring in and around Charlotte during the Democratic National Convention. This flier provides guidelines to follow in the event of a disturbance and provides our best information at the time it was prepared. This information is subject to change; for the most recent version, go to www.rcfp.org/conventions

Always carry with you two forms of identification: (1) your convention credential, any police-issued press pass or other documentation (such as police-issued press passes from prior events or your employer-issued I.D.) of your status as a professional journalist, and (2) a government-issued photo identification card. If you are detained without a government-issued I.D., the police will hold you until you can be fingerprinted and positively identified, a process that can take several hours and makes you ineligible for immediate release on bond. **Also** carry cash with you (see "Arrest & Release" below).

Make it visually obvious you are a member of the press. Any journalist wearing a helmet during a protest should have the word "PRESS" prominently displayed on the helmet itself. Indeed, it is advisable to always wear a hat and/or shirt that

display the word "PRESS" prominently. If an event becomes the subject of law enforcement activity, the best way to avoid being arrested is to report on those activities in a manner that does not obstruct the law enforcement activity, and to follow all police orders. Do not walk through a police line without first showing your press pass and obtaining permission.

POLICE INFORMATION. The Secret Service, FBI, Department of Homeland Security, Charlotte-Mecklenberg Police Department, Mecklenberg County Sheriff's Office, North Carolina State Highway Patrol, and other law enforcement agencies will all have a presence in and around convention-related locations, including the Time Warner Cable Arena, Bank of America Stadium, other convention sites and the designated parade route and demonstration sites.

In the event of any incident between the media and the police, you should immediately call the hotline.

During the convention, Charlotte will operate a Joint Information Center (JIC) to provide the media with a single point-of-contact for media inquiries related to safety and security issues. The media information line for the JIC is (704) 353-NEWS (6397). (*note:* This telephone number has been established for the benefit of media representatives only, not for the public. Please do not publish or broadcast the number upon receipt of it.)

In the event of any incident between the media and the police, you should immediately call the hotline at (704) 343-2063 or the alternate numbers above.

ACCESS. Access to the Time Warner Cable Arena, Bank of America Stadium and other convention-related sites, and particular areas within those sites, will be highly regulated. DNC-issued credentials are required to enter the arena and stadium. Do not expect to be permitted to enter any areas inside or in the vicinity of the convention sites or elsewhere that are closed by police for security reasons. And, again, do not walk through a police line without first showing your press pass and obtaining permission. Press credentials other than those issued by the DNC, *e.g.*, those issued by a city police department or city or state press association or other event, may be recognized in some places but not others. The City of Charlotte has no plans to issue press credentials for the event.

- Carry with you, at all times, (1) your RNC-issued press credential, if applicable, or employer-issued I.D., (2) a government-issued photo I.D., and (3) cash (*to post bond if necessary; credit cards cannot be used to post bond*).
- If you are detained, (1) comply with police orders; (2) identify yourself as a member of the press; (3) ask the arresting officer to notify a supervisor or captain that a reporter is being detained; and (4) call the hotline.

Media Hotline: (704) 343-2063

DETENTION. In the event police detain you during a disturbance, remain calm and obey instructions. In addition, (1) notify the arresting officer that you are a news reporter and show your credentials; (2) ask that a supervisor or captain be notified that a reporter is being detained; and (3) seek permission to call the hotline attorney at your earliest opportunity. Local law enforcement agencies have advised their officers not to interfere with working journalists, provided the journalists do not commit separate infractions or interfere with police operations or safety. Identifying yourself as a news reporter may reduce the likelihood of arrest, and may facilitate your release if you are caught up in a mass arrest. If you are covering the activities of a crowd that invites arrest and want to avoid being arrested along with them, move to the periphery of the activity so you can readily detach yourself should that prove necessary.

ARREST & RELEASE. If you are arrested for disorderly conduct, resist/delay/obstruction of a law enforcement officer, unlawful assembly, disturbing the peace, violation of a city ordinance, or any other non-felony offense, the quickest way to get back onto the streets to continue reporting is to cooperate and post bond, assuming bond is necessary.

You will be taken to the Arrest Processing Center, which is located at 5235 Spector Drive, Charlotte, NC 28269. A routine booking procedure will be conducted in which you will be fingerprinted, your photograph will be taken, and your identity will be verified. You should cooperate in giving your name, address, and other basic identifying information, but remember that other statements you make can and will be used against you in later proceedings. Note that if you do not have proof of your identity or refuse to provide it, you will be detained until your identity is determined.

Once processing is complete, you will be taken before a Magistrate, who will determine bond. Please note that this appearance before a Magistrate is not an arraignment; thus you will not be asked to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty. Typical bond for a misdemeanor offense that does not involve an allegation of any physical confrontation with law enforcement (or other individuals) or property damage ranges from \$200-\$750. The jail will not accept credit card payment or personal check to satisfy bond. If posting the entire amount in cash is not feasible, services of a bail bondsman are available; a typical fee for a bondsman is 10-15% of your bond.

You may be released with an un-secured bond, by personal signature, or pursuant to "pretrial release," none of which require the payment of any funds. This decision is made by the Magistrate at the jail. Please note that while phones will be available once your processing is complete, attorneys have no ability to confer with the Magistrate or advocate for a particular type of pre-trial release condition at this stage.

Upon release from jail, you will be given paperwork concerning your charge(s) and initial court date. The initial court date is usually scheduled approximately thirty (30) days post-release.

Upon your release from jail, property seized at the time of your arrest will be available at the Jail Annex, 5235 Spector Drive, Charlotte, NC 28269.

The Mecklenburg County Courthouse, located at 832 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, NC 28202, will be open to the public during the week of the Democratic National Convention (DNC), with the exception of Monday, September 3, 2012, which is a State holiday. Although the courts will operate on a limited basis during the week of the DNC, this limited schedule will *not* affect the timing of any initial court appearances following an arrest during that week.

If you cannot or refuse to post bond by the morning following your arrest, you will have an initial appearance before a Mecklenburg County District Court Judge the following day at 10:00 a.m. in Courtroom 1150 of the Mecklenburg County Courthouse. These initial appearances are done electronically (via closed-circuit). You will be able to see and hear the judge, who will be able to see and hear you. Attorneys have no role at these initial appearances. The judge will simply ensure that you are aware of your charge(s) and review the Magistrate's initial bond determination. The judge will also inquire about counsel: whether you plan to seek court-appointed counsel, retain counsel, or represent yourself. Following the initial appearance, you will be provided with a new court date and bond hearing date (both generally 10-14 days from the initial appearance). Please note that this initial appearance is not an arraignment; thus you will not be asked to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty.

Should you remain in jail overnight, there is a possibility that you will be moved from the Arrest Processing location to Jail-Central, which is located at 801 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, NC 28202.

Information about court dates, including building location, courtrooms, and time, are available at: <http://www1.aoc.state.nc.us/www/calendars/CriminalQuery.html>

Please note that during the DNC, access to the courthouse will be limited to the main entrance at Fourth Street and McDowell Street.

If you need assistance with subsequent court appearances, the Charlotte office of McGuireWoods LLP has agreed to assist news personnel in finding Charlotte legal counsel, but representation at any future court dates is not part of the free hotline service.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. When calling the hotline, please identify yourself as a journalist and state that you are calling the hotline. If you are taken into custody and unable to call the hotline, try to inform a colleague, employer or somebody else to contact the hotline on your behalf. You should call the hotline at your earliest opportunity thereafter, however, as the volunteer attorneys can be of little, if any, assistance before speaking with you.

The hotline should not be used for disputes over credentials or problems unrelated to your news coverage of the convention. You may call the Reporters Committee's regular hotline, (800) 336-4243, if you have other credentialing or access issues.

If you have any questions or comments about the hotline, contact Jonathan Buchan at McGuireWoods at (704) 343-2063, or Gregg Leslie, Legal Defense Director of the Reporters Committee, at (703) 807-2100.