

THE
REPORTERS
COMMITTEE
FOR
FREEDOM
OF THE
PRESS

Suite 900

1815 N. Fort Myer Drive
Arlington, VA 22209-1817
(703) 807-2100

rcfp@rcfp.org
http://www.rcfp.org

Lucy A. Dalglish
Executive Director

STEERING COMMITTEE

- SCOTT APPLEWHITE
The Associated Press
- ROSEMARY ARMAO
South Florida Sun-Sentinel
- CHARLES R. BABCOCK
The Washington Post
- CHIP BOK
Akron Beacon Journal
- EARL CALDWELL
Pacific Radio
- REBECCA CARR
Cox Newspapers
- WALTER CRONKITE
CBS News
- GARY DECKELNICK
Asbury Park Press
- RICHARD S. DUNHAM
Business Week
- ASHLEA EBELING
Forbes Magazine
- SARA FRITZ
freelance
- STEPHEN GEIMANN
Bloomberg News
- FRED GRAHAM
Court TV
- JOHN C. HENRY
Houston Chronicle
- NAT HENTOFF
The Village Voice
- KAREN GRAY HOUSTON
Fox News
- PETER JENNINGS
ABC News
- STEPHEN LABATON
The New York Times
- TONY MAURO
American Lawyer Media
- DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times
- WILSON F. MINOR
Factual Reporting Service
- SANDRA PEDDIE
Newsday
- DAN RATHER
CBS News
- DAVID ROSENBAUM
The New York Times
- CRISTINE RUSSELL
Freelance
- TIM RUSSERT
NBC News
- GERALD F. SEIB
The Wall Street Journal
- CAROLE SIMPSON
ABC News
- SAUNDRA TORRY
USA Today

*Affiliations appear only
for purposes of identification.*

November 22, 2004

The Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Gov. Ehrlich:

I am writing to express dismay and great disappointment in your order to your staff and state public information officers banning them from talking to Baltimore Sun columnist Michael Olesker and State House Bureau Chief David Nitkin. From what I have read of this incident, you apparently believe they are biased against you and have made mistakes in stories and columns about your administration.

I find it hard to believe that any newspaper in America would deliberately publish false information. If errors have been made in stories and columns regarding your administration, you are entitled to corrections. But I also understand that Editor Tim Franklin has made himself available to talk to you about your concerns, and you have not accepted his offer. I cannot fathom why not.

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press is a 35-year-old non-profit organization that does legal defense and advocacy work on behalf of journalists working in the United States. Your actions pose grave risks to fundamental First Amendment rights of journalists to gather and publish information.

And as a citizen of Maryland, what particularly disturbs me personally is the lack of leadership and maturity you are exhibiting regarding your relationship with the media. You have made it much more difficult for the people of Maryland to get information about state government. While it may prove temporarily satisfying to "punish" journalists with whom you disagree, it is your constituents who will ultimately suffer.

Please lift the state government freeze-out of Mr. Olesker and Mr. Nitkin.

Sincerely,

Lucy A. Dalglish
Executive Director