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(Original Signature of Member)

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R.

To maintain the free flow of information to the public by providing conditions for the federally compelled disclosure of information by certain persons connected with the news media.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BOUCHER (for himself, Mr. PENCE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COBLE, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. WALDEN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To maintain the free flow of information to the public by providing conditions for the federally compelled disclosure of information by certain persons connected with the news 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Free Flow of Informa-
5 tion Act of 2007”.

1 **SEC. 2. COMPELLED DISCLOSURE FROM COVERED PER-**
2 **SONS.**

3 (a) CONDITIONS FOR COMPELLED DISCLOSURE.—In
4 any proceeding or in connection with any issue arising
5 under Federal law, a Federal entity may not compel a cov-
6 ered person to provide testimony or produce any document
7 related to information possessed by such covered person
8 as part of engaging in journalism, unless a court deter-
9 mines by a preponderance of the evidence, after providing
10 notice and an opportunity to be heard to such covered per-
11 son—

12 (1) that the party seeking to compel production
13 of such testimony or document has exhausted all
14 reasonable alternative sources (other than a covered
15 person) of the testimony or document;

16 (2) that—

17 (A) in a criminal investigation or prosecu-
18 tion, based on information obtained from a per-
19 son other than the covered person—

20 (i) there are reasonable grounds to be-
21 lieve that a crime has occurred; and

22 (ii) the testimony or document sought
23 is essential to the investigation or prosecu-
24 tion or to the defense against the prosecu-
25 tion; or

1 (B) in a matter other than a criminal in-
2 vestigation or prosecution, based on information
3 obtained from a person other than the covered
4 person, the testimony or document sought is es-
5 sential to the successful completion of the mat-
6 ter;

7 (3) in the case that the testimony or document
8 sought could reveal the identity of a source of infor-
9 mation or include any information that could reason-
10 ably be expected to lead to the discovery of the iden-
11 tity of such a source, that—

12 (A) disclosure of the identity of such a
13 source is necessary to prevent imminent and ac-
14 tual harm to national security with the objective
15 to prevent such harm;

16 (B) disclosure of the identity of such a
17 source is necessary to prevent imminent death
18 or significant bodily harm with the objective to
19 prevent such death or harm, respectively; or

20 (C) disclosure of the identity of such a
21 source is necessary to identify a person who has
22 disclosed—

23 (i) a trade secret of significant value
24 in violation of a State or Federal law;

1 (ii) individually identifiable health in-
2 formation, as such term is defined in sec-
3 tion 1171(6) of the Social Security Act (42
4 U.S.C. 1320d(6)), in violation of Federal
5 law; or

6 (iii) nonpublic personal information,
7 as such term is defined in section 509(4)
8 of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (15 U.S.C.
9 6809(4)), of any consumer in violation of
10 Federal law; and

11 (4) that nondisclosure of the information would
12 be contrary to the public interest, taking into ac-
13 count both the public interest in compelling disclo-
14 sure and the public interest in gathering news and
15 maintaining the free flow of information.

16 (b) LIMITATIONS ON CONTENT OF INFORMATION.—
17 The content of any testimony or document that is com-
18 pelled under subsection (a) shall, to the extent possible—

19 (1) be limited to the purpose of verifying pub-
20 lished information or describing any surrounding cir-
21 cumstances relevant to the accuracy of such pub-
22 lished information; and

23 (2) be narrowly tailored in subject matter and
24 period of time covered so as to avoid compelling pro-

1 duction of peripheral, nonessential, or speculative in-
2 formation.

3 **SEC. 3. COMPELLED DISCLOSURE FROM COMMUNICATIONS**

4 **SERVICE PROVIDERS.**

5 (a) **CONDITIONS FOR COMPELLED DISCLOSURE.—**

6 With respect to testimony or any document consisting of
7 any record, information, or other communication that re-
8 lates to a business transaction between a communications
9 service provider and a covered person, section 2 shall apply
10 to such testimony or document if sought from the commu-
11 nications service provider in the same manner that such
12 section applies to any testimony or document sought from
13 a covered person.

14 (b) **NOTICE AND OPPORTUNITY PROVIDED TO COV-**
15 **ERED PERSONS.—**A court may compel the testimony or
16 disclosure of a document under this section only after the
17 party seeking such a document provides the covered per-
18 son who is a party to the business transaction described
19 in subsection (a)—

20 (1) notice of the subpoena or other compulsory
21 request for such testimony or disclosure from the
22 communications service provider not later than the
23 time at which such subpoena or request is issued to
24 the communications service provider; and

1 (2) an opportunity to be heard before the court
2 before the time at which the testimony or disclosure
3 is compelled.

4 (c) EXCEPTION TO NOTICE REQUIREMENT.—Notice
5 under subsection (b)(1) may be delayed only if the court
6 involved determines by clear and convincing evidence that
7 such notice would pose a substantial threat to the integrity
8 of a criminal investigation.

9 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

10 In this Act:

11 (1) COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDER.—
12 The term “communications service provider”—

13 (A) means any person that transmits infor-
14 mation of the customer’s choosing by electronic
15 means; and

16 (B) includes a telecommunications carrier,
17 an information service provider, an interactive
18 computer service provider, and an information
19 content provider (as such terms are defined in
20 sections 3 and 230 of the Communications Act
21 of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 153, 230)).

22 (2) COVERED PERSON.—The term “covered
23 person” means a person engaged in journalism and
24 includes a supervisor, employer, parent, subsidiary,
25 or affiliate of such covered person.

1 (3) DOCUMENT.—The term “document” means
2 writings, recordings, and photographs, as those
3 terms are defined by Federal Rule of Evidence 1001
4 (28 U.S.C. App.).

5 (4) FEDERAL ENTITY.—The term “Federal en-
6 tity” means an entity or employee of the judicial or
7 executive branch or an administrative agency of the
8 Federal Government with the power to issue a sub-
9 poena or issue other compulsory process.

10 (5) JOURNALISM.—The term “journalism”
11 means the gathering, preparing, collecting,
12 photographing, recording, writing, editing, reporting,
13 or publishing of news or information that concerns
14 local, national, or international events or other mat-
15 ters of public interest for dissemination to the pub-
16 lic.