



March 12, 2018

Commissioner Richard W. Sanders
Kentucky State Police Headquarters
919 Versailles Road
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

DELIVERED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Commissioner Sanders,

I'm writing today on behalf of the Radio Television Digital News Association, the world's largest professional association devoted exclusively to advocating on behalf of broadcast and digital journalists.

Please add our national voice to the outcry in southeastern Kentucky opposing an apparent new policy in which your agency has ordered journalists there not to report on incidents under Kentucky State Police investigation until the official KSP "press release is sent out."

In addition to the nearly 100 broadcast and digital journalists who live and work in Kentucky and the states that immediately surround it, RTDNA represents thousands of such journalists across the entire United States, all of whom may, from time to time, need to perform their constitutionally-guaranteed duty to seek and report facts that are subject to, or relevant to, investigations being conducted by the KSP.

I respectfully submit, Commissioner Sanders, that such an order is, on its face, in direct contravention of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. While that amendment states that "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of...the press," the courts – up to and including the U.S. Supreme Court – have consistently ruled throughout the decades that the First Amendment applies to *all* government institutions or agencies, whether their jurisdictions are federal, state, or local.

I, on behalf of the broadcast and digital journalists RTDNA represents, insist that you rescind this new policy forthwith. Any time the efforts of journalists are restricted it is not those journalists who are the victims. Rather, it is the public – in this case the citizens of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, whom you are sworn to protect and serve – that becomes the victim because it is being denied information to which it is constitutionally entitled.

Sincerely,