

SIGN-ON: Bipartisan Letter to Pres. Biden to End Assange Case - Deadline: COB Thursday Oct. 26

Dear Colleague,

Please join our bipartisan letter to strongly encourage the Biden Administration to withdraw the U.S. extradition request currently pending against Australian publisher Julian Assange and halt all prosecutorial proceedings against him as soon as possible.

Mr. Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, faces multiple charges under the Espionage Act due to his role in publishing classified documents about the U.S. State Department, Guantanamo Bay, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has been detained on remand in London since 2019 and is pending extradition to the U.S., having lost his appeal of the extradition order in the courts of the United Kingdom.

Deep concerns about this case have been repeatedly expressed by international media outlets, human rights and press freedom advocates. Last April, several Members of Congress argued to Attorney General Merrick Garland that “[e]very day that the prosecution of Julian Assange continues is another day that our own government needlessly undermines our own moral authority abroad and rolls back the freedom of the press under the First Amendment at home.” One example: the Assange case has been [cited by officials of the People’s Republic of China](#) to claim that the U.S. is “hypocritical” when it comes to support for media freedom.

Please join us in urging the Administration to bring the Assange case to a close in as timely a manner as possible.

For questions, contact [Kimberly Stanton](#) (for Rep. McGovern) or [Marshall Yates](#) (for Rep. Massie). **To join the letter by Thursday, October 26th, sign via Quill [here](#).**

Sincerely,

/s/

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Thomas Massie
Member of Congress

Dear President Biden,

As Members of Congress deeply committed to the principles of free speech and freedom of the press, we write to strongly encourage your Administration to withdraw the U.S. extradition request currently pending against Australian publisher Julian Assange and halt all prosecutorial proceedings against him as soon as possible.

Mr. Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, faces multiple charges under the Espionage Act due to his role in publishing classified documents about the U.S. State Department, Guantanamo Bay, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has been detained on remand in London since 2019 and is pending extradition to the U.S., having lost his appeal of the extradition order in the courts of the United Kingdom.

Deep concerns about this case have been repeatedly expressed by international media outlets, human rights and press freedom advocates, and Members of Congress, among others. To cite only a few of the commentaries, in November 2022, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *DER SPEIGEL* and *El País* [came together to express their grave concerns](#) about the continued prosecution of Julian Assange for obtaining and publishing classified materials, arguing that “publishing is not a crime.” In December 2022, a coalition of press freedom, civil liberties, and international human rights organizations [wrote to Attorney General Merrick Garland](#) urging him to correct course and abandon the relentless pursuit of Mr. Assange in order to protect the ability of journalists to report freely on the United States without fear of retribution. U.S. elected officials have previously called on the Administration to drop the charges against Mr. Assange, including in April of this year when [Members of the House argued](#) that “[e]very day that the prosecution of Julian Assange continues is another day that our own government needlessly undermines our own moral authority abroad and rolls back the freedom of the press under the First Amendment at home.”

We believe the Department of Justice acted correctly in 2013, during your vice-presidency, when it [declined to pursue charges](#) against Mr. Assange for publishing the classified documents because it recognized that the prosecution would set a dangerous precedent. We note that the 1917 Espionage Act was ostensibly intended to punish and imprison government employees and contractors for providing or selling state secrets to enemy governments, not to punish journalists and whistleblowers for attempting to inform the public about serious issues that some U.S. government officials might prefer to keep secret. We are aware that the Assange case has been [cited by officials of the People’s Republic of China](#) to claim that the U.S. is “hypocritical” when it comes to its purported support for media freedom. We are also well aware that should the U.S. extradition and prosecution go forward, there is a significant risk that our [bilateral relationship with Australia will be badly damaged](#).

It is the duty of journalists to seek out sources, including documentary evidence, in order to report to the public on the activities of government. The United States must not pursue an unnecessary prosecution that risks criminalizing common journalistic practices and thus chilling the work of the free press. We urge you to ensure that this case be brought to a close in as timely a manner as possible.