

**From:** J [REDACTED]  
**To:** [City Council](#)  
**Subject:** Press Freedom in Sebastopol  
**Date:** Monday, March 3, 2025 11:09:31 AM

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Dear Sebastopol City Council Members,

I read with dismay your recently enacted limitation on press access to Council Members and Sebastopol City Staff. I urge you to rescind those policies and restore full public and press access to our dedicated Council Members and City Staff.

Although I live outside the city limits, I am an engaged part of the Sebastopol community who relies on the City for health care, food and clothing, and a wide variety of services.

Three quick points to consider:

1. My family spends well over \$10,000 a year on goods and services in the City of Sebastopol proper. Not only do we rely on information from publications like the Sebastopol Times and Press Democrat to know what businesses are open, new, or have closed, we count on them to keep us informed that Sebastopol is a values-aligned place to shop. We firmly believe that every penny we spend is a vote for the future we want to see. We count on a free press reporting in depth on Sebastopol to help us make those decisions. I believe this policy is not only anti-press, but anti-business in that it reduces confidence in the City.
2. We live in a moment of great turmoil (peril, I believe) where freedom of the press is actively under attack at the federal level by the current administration. It is incredibly disheartening to see our local City Council moving in ways that curtail press freedom. This is a moment for more openness and engagement, not less.
3. Sebastopol is doing great work to build a city that creates opportunity. You have nothing to hide, nor be ashamed of. Policies that get in the way of free and open exchange of information between the city and the press simply impede the flow of information and raise concerns about hidden malfeasance. It is ultimately a counter-productive form of control. A better path is to let your residents and the community know you are confident enough in us and your work to assess accurately how the city is doing and make judgements from that. That is mutual respect.

Finally, I can not tell you how much I value the outstanding coverage of the City by the Sebastopol Times. Their in depth reporting on the city, particularly by Laura Hagar Rush, has been an engine that has increased my esteem of the City. Please let her and other current and future reporters do their work without unnecessary impediments.

Thank You,

Joseph McIntyre  
[REDACTED]