

# :Utgivarna

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## **Statement by Utgivarna on proposed changes to US visas for foreign journalists**

The recently announced plans for stricter visa rules for foreign journalists in the United States seriously risk undermining the ability to conduct long-term and in-depth journalism. Today, a visa for journalists can be valid for up to five years, allowing journalists to work continuously in the country or travel in and out for various assignments. The American plans to limit the visa to 240 days would severely affect foreign media's ability to cover news in the U.S. Additionally, it is unclear how decisions regarding possible extensions would be made. We are also concerned by the U.S. government's statement that the change is necessary to better "monitor and oversee" visa holders while they are in the United States.

Many foreign news organizations have a permanent presence in the U.S. by sending correspondents there for several years. It also applies to Sweden, which has a number of journalists living in the United States. This gives journalists the opportunity to better understand the country and thus report more insightfully to the rest of the world. Limiting their stay poses a significant risk to how the U.S. is represented globally. This applies to all types of journalistic coverage, including major events such as the World Cup, the Olympics, and the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is the cornerstone of its reputation for freedom of speech and of the press. This proposal represents a serious threat to that and risks damaging the United States' global reputation as a free and open democracy, as well as reducing the world's ability to better understand the U.S. We therefore urge the U.S. government not to implement the proposed changes to visa rules for journalists.

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*In the organization Utgivarna (The Publishers' Association) the media companies that defend freedom of expression and safeguard independent journalism work together.*

*Members include Sveriges Radio, Sveriges Television, the Swedish Magazine Publishers Association, the Swedish Newspaper Publishers' Association, TV4, and the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company.*