

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



Chairman Chip Roy  
Ranking Member Mary Gay Scanlon  
U. S. House Committee on the Judiciary  
Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government  
2138 Rayburn House Building  
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2026

Dear Chairman Roy, Ranking Member Gay Scanlon, and members of the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government,

*Amnesty International USA submits this letter to the House Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government for record submission in the upcoming hearing on “From Tool to Weapon: The FACE Act and the Dangers of Federalizing Criminal Law.”*

Amnesty International is an international non-governmental, non-profit organization representing the largest grassroots human rights movement in the world, with more than ten million members, supporters and activists. Amnesty International USA is the global organization’s presence in the United States. Amnesty International’s mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. Amnesty International advocates for global compliance with international human rights law, the development of human rights norms, and the effective enjoyment of human rights by all persons. It monitors state compliance with international human rights law and engages in advocacy, litigation, and education to prevent and end human rights violations and to demand justice for those whose rights have been violated.

Amnesty International USA is deeply alarmed by the continued efforts of the Trump administration to constrain civic space and undermine the rule of law domestically and internationally, with grave consequences for human rights safeguards.

We are asking members of this committee to stop the misuse of the FACE Act against journalists and to ensure it is actually used as intended to protect healthcare providers and patients from physical violence, harassment and intimidation when providing or obtaining the healthcare they need.

Amnesty International affirms that everyone has the right to abortion, free of force, coercion, violence or discrimination. Forcing someone to carry a pregnancy to term is a violation of their



human rights, and states must ensure the right to equality and non-discrimination to fully realize the rights to life and health and other human rights for pregnant people.

The UN expert committee that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) recognized in its General Recommendation 35 on gender-based violence that criminalization of abortion, as well as denial or delay of safe abortion and post-abortion care, are not only violations of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, but also as "forms of gender-based violence that ... may amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment."<sup>1</sup>

The FACE Act, the focus of today's hearing, was enacted to protect individuals entering reproductive health clinics or places of worship from violence, intimidation, and harassment. We are deeply concerned that the Trump administration has stopped using the provisions under this law to prevent harassment and intimidation of those seeking to access health and safe abortion care at a time of roll backs on sexual and reproductive rights around the country, intensifying attacks against healthcare clinics, the criminalization of pregnant people for their pregnancy outcomes, and increasing maternal and infant mortality rates.<sup>2</sup>

Further, this hearing brings to light examples of the erosion of institutional independence and redirection of prosecutorial power toward political ends. This is about weaponizing a longstanding federal law that was passed 30 years ago with strong bipartisan support that seeks to protect reproductive healthcare providers and patients from physical violence. In a grotesque misuse of the FACE Act, the DOJ has charged Georgia Fort and other journalists with violating the FACE Act for reporting on a protest at Cities Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. We are witnessing the dismantling of anti-discrimination measures to scapegoat pregnant people seeking access to reproductive healthcare, and to justify attempts to criminalize journalism.

### **Weaponization of FACE Act Against Journalists**

On January 18, 2026, eleven days after ICE agents in Minneapolis, Minnesota killed Renee Good, demonstrators protested inside Cities Church in St. Paul because one of the church's pastors was an acting field office director for ICE there at the time. Local journalist Georgia Fort and other journalists arrived at the scene to document the protest.

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<sup>1</sup> CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating General Recommendation 19, UN Doc. CEDAW/C/GC/35 (2017), para. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Justice, Memorandum for Kathleen Wolfe Supervisory Official of the Civil Rights Division, 24 January 2025, <https://www.justice.gov/media/1386461/dl> ("future abortion-related FACE Act prosecutions and civil actions will be permitted only in extraordinary circumstances, or in cases presenting significant aggravating factors, such as death, serious bodily harm, or serious property damage").



The Department of Justice unsuccessfully attempted at the magistrate, district, and appellate court levels to arrest Georgia Fort and the other journalists for reporting on the protests.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, the DOJ called for a grand jury hearing resulting in an indictment on three felony charges, including

pursuant to the FACE Act, against Georgia Fort and the other journalists. In the early morning on 30 January, Georgia Fort was arrested. She livestreamed Drug Enforcement Agency agents showing up to her home to arrest her for being a journalist who documented a protest inside a church. Amnesty International USA is deeply concerned that the FACE Act is being weaponized against journalists and is being used as a tool to erode human rights safeguards.

Applying the FACE Act against journalists is a further escalation in the Trump administration's use of authoritarian tactics against the press and journalists. Since January 2025, the Trump administration has consistently targeted journalists for reporting on its actions. Examples of this targeting include the deportation of journalist and asylum-seeker Mario Guevara, who reported on ICE raids; the FBI seizure of personal and professional devices from a Washington, DC reporter's home; the White House's launch of a website focused on attacking journalists and media outlets not in line with the administration; and the weaponization of the Federal Communications Commission's authority to approve licensing and corporate media mergers based on corporate rejection of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.<sup>4</sup> The targeting and discrediting of reporters and the media by those in power around the world is a common tactic across many contexts of repression. Narrative control and silencing dissent or non-aligned reporting are key strategies used by those in power to seek to act without accountability.

Press freedom is protected under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the US ratified, including the right of journalists to seek and share information, as well as by the First Amendment.<sup>5</sup> These rights are crucial for the public to hold leaders accountable; without this, leaders are further emboldened to commit abuses with impunity.<sup>6</sup> For the Department of Justice to prosecute Georgia Fort and other journalists with criminal charges,

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<sup>3</sup> New York Times, "Don Lemon Hires Federal Prosecutor Who Quit Over Immigration Crackdown", 10 February 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/10/us/joseph-thompson-don-lemon-minneapolis-protest.html>

<sup>4</sup> Associated Press, "Spanish-language journalist arrested while covering protest near Atlanta deported to El Salvador", 3 October 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/journalist-detained-immigration-ice-mario-guevara-atlanta-dace73271b02d6e41890ba0554859b12>; Washington Post, "FBI Agents Search Washington Post Reporter's Home", 14 January 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/01/14/washington-post-reporter-search/>; Reporters Without Borders, "USA: New White House 'Hall of Shame' Webpage Expands Trump's War on the Press, Disparaging the Media", 3 December 2025, <https://rsf.org/en/usa-new-white-house-hall-shame-webpage-expands-trump-s-war-press-disparaging-media>; and FCC Chairman Brendan Carr, X Post: "I am concerned by Verizon's continued focus on promoting DEI. I expect all regulated businesses to end invidious forms of discrimination.", 27 February 2025, <https://x.com/BrendanCarrFCC/status/1895211283089367318>.

<sup>5</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 19.

<sup>6</sup> Amnesty International, *Ring the Alarm Bells: Rising Authoritarian Practices and Erosion of Human Rights in the United States* (Index: AMR 51/0616/2026), 20 January 2026, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Ringing-the-Alarm-Bells-Rising-Authoritarian-Practices-and-Erosion-of-Human-Rights-in-the-United-States.pdf>



including a hate crime, for reporting on a protest inside Cities Church in St. Paul, Minnesota is to target them for simply doing their job as journalists and violates their human rights.

Reporting is not a crime. These charges under the FACE Act will have a chilling and intimidating impact on the work of journalists who are covering issues that are most pressing to communities at risk of abuses. States have an obligation to protect journalists and not to persecute them in an

effort to control the free flow of information. A free media is not only beneficial but necessary in a free society. **The charges against Georgia Fort and the other journalists must be dropped.**<sup>7</sup>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'N. Daar'.

Nadia Daar  
Executive Director

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<sup>7</sup> District Court of Minnesota, United States v. Levy Armstrong, Case 0:26-cr-25-LMP-DLM (2026)