

October 21, 2026

Via Email

Mr. William O. Scharf
Counsel to the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500
William.O.Scharf@who.eop.gov

Re: Response to your letter of October 19, 2026

Dear Mr. Scharf:

We write on behalf of our client POLITICO LLC (“POLITICO”) in response to your October 19, 2026, letter to Jonathan Greenberger, its Global Editor-in-Chief, regarding three articles published by POLITICO between October 14 and October 17, 2026.

POLITICO is well aware of the importance of its constitutionally protected role as a news organization committed to keeping the American people informed, and it strives for accuracy in its reporting. POLITICO categorically rejects the false accusations in your letter that it “chose to publish fanciful fiction” and “purposeful falsehoods designed to mislead the public.” And we note that your letter largely ignores the actual substance of POLITICO’s reporting that you purport to criticize. You complain, for example, that one of the three articles you cite purportedly disregarded “information directly contradicting” an “allegation” when, in fact, the information you refer to—denials from senior administration officials—is included in the published reporting itself.

That said, POLITICO takes seriously assertions like those made in your letter. Accordingly, consistent with its commitment to ensuring its reporting is as accurate as possible, POLITICO re-examined all three articles identified in your letter and did follow up reporting. As a result, POLITICO determined it was appropriate to correct one of the three articles identified in your letter—an October 16, 2026, article concerning the role of White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles in a television appearance by then-White House Press Secretary Katie Zacharia on Sean Hannity’s show on Fox News—to say that Ms. Wiles offered “positive reinforcement” for the interview but did not play a direct role in booking the interview. The updated version of that article, reflecting the information obtained through POLITICO’s further reporting, has now been published. Promptly and transparently making corrections, as POLITICO has done here, is a hallmark of journalistic ethics and integrity, and of the very professionalism your letter falsely claims POLITICO is lacking.

We would be remiss if we did not note that the timing and substance of your letter further confirms the unlawful retaliatory and viewpoint discriminatory motives underlying the President's unconstitutional September 18, 2026 "ban" of POLITICO, along with CNN and MS NOW, from the White House—a ban, as you know, that Judge Timothy Kelly of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia preliminarily enjoined on due process and First Amendment grounds just last week. As Judge Kelly made clear when he issued a preliminary injunction enjoining the White House from revoking POLITICO's White House "hard pass" press credentials to punish it for the content of its news coverage, the White House cannot constitutionally retaliate or discriminate against POLITICO because it dislikes particular news stories or believes POLITICO's "cumulative" coverage of the President and his administration is too "negative." To the extent your letter is, as it transparently appears to be, an attempt to manufacture some justification predicated on vague "standards of professionalism" for the White House to continue its pattern of unconstitutional conduct targeting POLITICO, it fails.

To be clear, any error that you could identify in POLITICO's reporting about the President or his administration would not excuse the White House's unconstitutional retaliation and discrimination against POLITICO for the content of its news coverage. As the United States Supreme Court explained in the landmark *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* decision, "erroneous statements" are "inevitable in free debate," and they "must be protected if freedoms of expression are to have the breathing space that they need to survive." POLITICO's reporting about the President and his administration, including the three stories identified in your letter, is at the core of the First Amendment's protections for free speech and a free press. The White House's efforts to retaliate against POLITICO for its constitutionally protected journalism, and to discriminate against POLITICO based on what the President perceives to be its editorial viewpoint is a profound affront to the most fundamental constitutional rights.

POLITICO will defend its journalism and the right of its reporters to pursue their mission and report fearlessly on the President and other White House officials for the benefit of the American public, notwithstanding the White House's ongoing attempts to intimidate POLITICO and chill and punish that reporting.

POLITICO reserves all rights.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Theodore J. Boutros Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Theodore J. Boutros Jr.

CC: Michael Velchick, Senior Counsel,
Department of Justice