



New York Press Photographers Association, Inc.

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I'm Bruce Cotler, President of the New York Press Photographers Association. I am also an award winning photojournalist, with 30 plus years of experience; I am speaking to you on behalf of the New York Press Photographer's Association—the organization that represents the photojournalists in the New York City area. I'm testifying today to make clear that the NYPPA opposes the proposed MOME initiative to grant press cards to minor children 15 and older; due to the volatile nature of large news events, not only are they a place of considerable danger for children, but also large news events simply aren't a place for minors and their adult chaperones who have no experience with the professional decorum of the press.

I should know because I have attended many breaking news events over the years, and one that particularly comes to mind is an anti-migrant protest, which I was present at last year that turned violent on a dime— myself, and a female photographer had to be rescued by the NYPD, because the protestors surrounded us and were becoming violent. These hostile protestors had targeted us because we were journalists covering the event. I also covered the George Floyd protests, in which I had to wear a ballistic vest and helmet for my safety; even though I had them on, I was pelted with objects thrown from the angry crowd of protestors.

If these single use press cards were in affect for minor children at the time and said children were in attendance, they would undoubtedly have been targeted or injured— as several professional journalists have been in the past. It's also not possible for minors or their inexperienced guardians to know how to react to or handle these types of crises, nor how to handle a situation with law enforcement if police need to be involved. We were not asked our opinion for this misguided proposal, and the New York Press Photographer's Association disavows any attempts to grant these types of press cards to minor children due to the inherent danger it would present them, their chaperones, and the members of the press.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,
Bruce Cotler
President New York Press Photographers Association