

March 28, 2011

Paul Ainslie
Chairman,
Government Management Committee

Re: GM2.12 Councillor Protection at City Properties-Update
(on agenda of March 29, 2011 Government Management Committee meeting)

Dear Paul:

It is with dismay that I have learned of the latest proposal to limit the access enjoyed by accredited journalists in the City Hall Press Gallery to councillor offices on the second floor of 100 Queen St. W.

I'd thought this issue had been put to rest last year when it had been determined that a proposal to beef up security with respect to those visiting from outside City Hall (constituents and lobbyists) should not include accredited members of the media leasing office space in the City Hall Press Gallery.

As you can appreciate, unlimited access to the second floor allows us to meet with councillors to pursue story leads and tips — in a confidential manner — without concern that our intentions will become public knowledge.

I have been covering City Hall for the Toronto Sun since April of 1998 and as such, have enjoyed unfettered access to second-floor councillor offices for 13 years. At no time did I, or my colleagues working for the Sun, abuse our privileges or pose a security risk to councillors. In fact, as dogged as I may be about pursuing a story, I have always respected the decision of a councillor not to comment.

I find it surprising that this issue would even come up considering what is supposed to be a new era of openness and transparency at City Hall. It would be a shame if such draconian measures compromised that openness.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our concerns.

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