

WNPR Statement for FOI Task Force  
October 16, 2013

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee,

We are writing on behalf of WNPR News, the journalism wing of Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network. We are sorry we are unable to attend today's hearing, but we have submitted this statement to be read into the record.

WNPR, along with the rest of our state and nation, has been profoundly affected by the events of December 14, 2012. We take seriously our dual responsibilities as engaged members of this community and as watchdogs working on behalf of the public trust.

In the days and months following that tragedy, WNPR and our associates at NPR in Washington took great pains to report factually and sensitively on all aspects of this news. But we paid special attention to the need for privacy and space of the victims' families. Our bedrock foundation is as part of a community that cares for one another, and that will continue into the future.

We take great care to handle sensitive audio, video and still images of crime scenes and only, and rarely, publish after serious consideration.

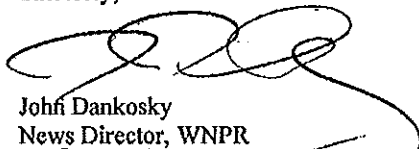
Our work is to search for the truth in all forms, and in this role we are troubled by the state's decision to restrict access to information that should, in our analysis, be part of the public record.

While we respect those who have testified to the contrary, Freedom of Information for public records is a key tool for both media and other members of the public to seek that truth.

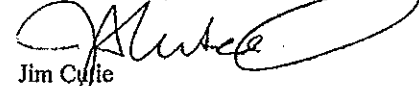
Also troubling to us was the lack of this very kind of public hearing before laws restricting the access to information were passed. We have been told that these laws were a "stopgap" until a police investigation is complete. But combined with the long wait for that report, these changes have resulted in a chilling effect in our search for information – even as we approach the one year anniversary of this tragedy.

We ask that you consider recommending greater transparency for information involving crimes in our state. Our hearts are still heavy for the families who lost loved ones that day, as they are for the countless other victims of crime during this last year in Connecticut. And as a respected, responsible news organization, we will uphold the public trust with sensitivity and care, while using this information for its highest purpose – that of finding truth in tragedy.

Sincerely,



John Dankosky  
News Director, WNPR



Jim Curie  
Network Content Director, CPBN  
Publisher, WNPR News.org