US judge extends media outlets' White House access

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A federal judge extended an order that blocks the Trump administration from banning media outlets from the White House. The outlets have reasonable grounds to think they'll win the case, the judge said.

A US federal judge has extended an order to allow three US media outlets to report from the White House, despite the Trump administration trying to ban them.

The three outlets, CNN, MS NOW and Politico, filed a lawsuit against the White House decision on constitutional free speech and due process grounds.

In September, District Judge Timothy Kelly issued an order to temporarily restore the outlets' access to the White House.

That order was set to expire Tuesday.

What else do we know about the judge's decision?

In his decision, Judge Kelly ruled that President Donald Trump likely broke the law by trying to ban the outlets.

He then issued a preliminary injunction to extend the previous order for the duration of the case.

"The Court will extend the relief it already ordered, which will continue to preserve the status quo while this case proceeds," Kelly wrote in the opinion accompanying his order.

The judge — who was nominated by Trump — added that the decision should not be interpreted as "claiming that President Donald Trump's claims about accuracy and fairness in the media's reporting are unfounded."

"President Trump likely banned Plaintiffs from the White House because he believes that their reporting is generally inaccurate and biased against him," Kelly wrote.

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What has been the state of press freedoms under Trump?

Trump has for years sought to undermine press credibility and regularly branded news outlets he doesn't like as the "enemy of the people."

On Tuesday, Judge Kelly said the original White House ban would likely "deter a reasonable reporter or news organization from publishing stories to which he objects."

Kelly cited a Washington Federal Appeals Court precedent when handing down his Tuesday decision, noting that the White House must follow proper procedure before revoking press credentials.

Despite White House claims to the contrary, Kelly said he thought media outlets suing the Trump administration were "likely to succeed not only on their due process claim, but also on their two First Amendment claims."

The First Ammendment of the US Constitution guarantees, among other things, "the right to freedom of speech and freedom of the press."

The Trump administration has repeatedly claimed that journalists have no "right" to report from the White House, calling access a "privilege" to be granted or taken away by the president.

Edited by: Zac Crellin

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