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July 1, 2021

Rep. Ron Gillham  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Rep. Gillham:

As members of the board of directors of the Alaska Broadcasters Association, we were dismayed to learn that you shared an offensive hate speech image on your Facebook page last week. The image you shared with your followers clearly suggests violence against journalists who report on the COVID-19 pandemic and on members of the medical community. As an organization representing almost every commercial and non-commercial radio and television station in the state of Alaska, we strongly object to your action to spread this false, offensive and potentially dangerous material. Doing so puts the safety of Alaska journalists and medical professionals at risk.

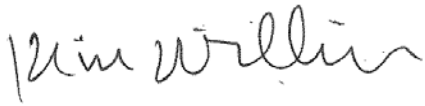
Now that you are an elected public official, your social media posts are influential. You have a responsibility to the people of your district and to all of the citizens of Alaska to set a higher standard for the truth and to consider the implications of what you post. You cannot separate your private views from your new job – you are a public figure now and you are accountable to the all of the people of Alaska. Your sharing of this hate message was dangerous and irresponsible.

As an industry that employs hundreds of responsible, hardworking journalists, we condemn rhetoric that endangers the lives of journalists in communities all over Alaska, including your hometown, who work hard every day to keep the public informed. Violence against journalists, once unimaginable in the United States, is on the upswing, encouraged by hate groups who distort the truth. The Committee to Protect Journalists reports 300 assaults on reporters in the U.S. in 2020. Newspaper reporters at a quiet suburban newspaper in Maryland were gunned down at their desks. “Murder the media” was scratched into a door of the U.S. Capitol on January 6. You dishonor your position and your oath by promoting this message.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors, Alaska Broadcasters Association

CC: Rep. Louise Stutes, Speaker of the Alaska House of Representatives  
Rep. Cathy Tilton, Minority Leader, Alaska House of Representatives



Kim Williams  
Market President  
iHeartMedia  
Fairbanks  
**ABA Board President**



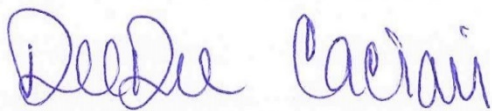
Edward Ulman  
President & CEO  
Alaska Public Media  
Anchorage  
**ABA Board Vice-President**



Charles Sather  
Chief Operating Officer  
KNBA-FM  
Anchorage  
**ABA Board Treasurer**



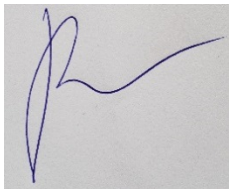
Matt Wilson  
General Manager, KSRM Inc.  
Kenai  
**ABA Board Legislative Liaison**



DeeDee Caciari  
Station Manager/General Sales Manager  
KTVF-KXDF-KTVF-TV  
Fairbanks  
**ABA Board Past-President**



Patty Burchell  
General Manager  
KICY-AM/FM  
Nome



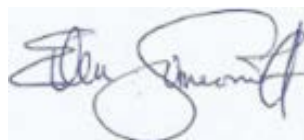
Richard Burns  
Chairman & CEO  
Frontier Media  
Juneau



Bill Legere  
President & General Manager  
KTOO Public Media  
Juneau



J. R. Lewis  
General Manager  
KLAM-FM/KCDV-FM  
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Ellen Simeonoff  
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Scott Smith  
Market Manager  
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Cathy Hiebert  
Executive Director  
Alaska Broadcasters Association