

Bloomberg

June 16, 2010

Dear WHCA Board Member,

We write to you as a board member of the White House Correspondents Association to request that the front row seat at the press briefing room, with the retirement of Helen Thomas, go to Bloomberg News.

Bloomberg is the fastest growing news organization in the world, with multiple platforms: a real-time 24/7 electronic newspaper, a global television network, a national magazine, a newspaper syndicate and a website. No news organization is more committed to Washington or White House reporting.

We have covered the President full time since 1993, and have been a regular member of the pool for more than 12 years. We have six reporters covering the White House fulltime, for print and broadcast, a number that soon will be expanded. We cover every presidential trip, domestic and international, and are a standing, fulltime member of the press pool. Our seriousness and professionalism are unquestioned.

As you know, briefing room seating has a diverse history. It once was determined by the White House; appropriately that role was transferred to the White House Correspondents Association.

The decisions are based on merit and there is no history of one board making a commitment for a subsequent newly elected board. Circumstances change as do news organizations.

On the merits, Bloomberg is the natural choice for this slot.

White House briefings are eclectic, from the major issues of the economy, war or the BP oil spill, to the Salahiis, ACORN or even birth certificates. That important range includes health care, the global financial structure, government regulation, taxes, the Supreme Court and politics, among other topics.

There is no other news organization, not currently assigned to that coveted front row, that begins to cover the range of these issues as regularly or is as well-positioned to ask questions or demand accountability from the spokesman for the President. Bloomberg currently has 150 reporters and editors in our Washington bureau; with the launch of B-Gov, a new web-based journalistic venture reporting on the intersection of business and governmental policy in a range of areas, this number may increase substantially in the next year.

The latest issue of the American Journalism Review chronicles the unsurpassed range of Bloomberg's Washington coverage.

Only twenty years old, we now have 2,300 print and television reporters and editors around the globe in 146 bureaus.

A letter last week from an official at Fox News dismissed any claim Bloomberg might have, calling us a "financial niche news outlet, not a general interest news organization like Fox News."

This is sadly out of date.

Our White House reporters provide coverage for readers of the Bloomberg terminal, which goes to the most influential economic and financial decision makers in the world, and Bloomberg.com, one of the nation's fastest growing news websites. They also represent Business Week magazine and Bloomberg Television, which broadcasts 24-7 on every major continent. And their stories often are distributed by the Washington Post-Bloomberg News syndicate (Bloomberg this year replaced the Los Angeles Times), which goes to almost 400 newspapers in the United States and abroad. We write about matters financial and non-financial.

As the American Journalism Review noted, "Once a financial media outlet primarily for wealthy CEOs, investors, bankers and the like, Bloomberg now distributes a much broader daily report."

More worrisome, the Fox News official claims they're entitled to this seat because of commitments --mostly verbal -- that were made in 2007. Whatever the board decides, awarding a seat because of earlier sentiments would be a terrible precedent.

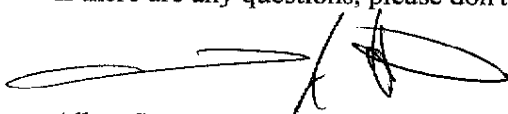
The Fox assertions are also riddled with contradictions. They cite seniority as a guiding principle in the 2007 decision and in their claim today. Bloomberg started covering the White House full time before Fox News existed.

Among the earlier supporters they claim is Helen Thomas. Yet only a week ago a top Fox News anchorman, in a broadcast interview, declared it would be "poetic justice" to give Helen's seat to Fox as she was left-leaning, and presumably Fox the opposite. (News Corp. does have five briefing-room seats.)

We don't believe the seat should be awarded on the basis of seniority, ideology, tradition (It has been occupied mainly by a wire service) or discussions held years ago; it's not something to be conferred. It should be on merit, the journalistic contribution that the occupant of that valued seat will make to the briefings and to informing the public.

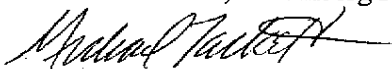
If that is the standard, Bloomberg should occupy that row along with our fellow pool members, the Associated Press and Reuters.

If there are any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.



Albert R. Hunt

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