# **LTEs: Pardon Assange!**

**Hello!**

**Please let us know in a reply email to team@AssangeDefense.org which letter you would like to sign. In this email please also include your address, phone number, and full name so our team can submit your chosen LTE on your behalf to a local publication.**

**Solidarity,**

**Team Assange Defense**

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### **#1: President Trump Can Build a Legacy by Defending Free Speech (235 words)**

President Trump has a unique opportunity to enhance his legacy.

We can all agree that America is divided. We have wasted much of the past four years arguing with each other in increasingly unproductive ways. If we want to improve our national dialogue, we need free, fair, and unbiased media to help facilitate the exchange of ideas. President Trump can further that goal by pardoning WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and whistleblower Edward Snowden.

Old Media failed us in the run-up to the war in Iraq. It fails us today by serving as echo chambers for partisan bickering. The clearest proof of their failure: it takes brave whistleblowers, putting their freedom on the line, to keep us informed about government misconduct. More and more, whistleblowers choose not to work with Old Media; they work with outlets like WikiLeaks to get the truth out.

Social Media could be an alternative where everyday people can discuss issues, but tech giants like Twitter and Facebook are restricting free speech online.

We need an informed public and a free press. People like Assange and Snowden take those needs seriously. They shouldn’t be locked away.

Time will tell if Joe Biden is a friend of press freedom. But President Trump could drastically improve his legacy by pardoning Assange and Snowden before Biden takes office. He would be restoring American values, and the world would be a much better place for it.

### **#2: President Trump Can Build a Legacy by Defending Free Speech (200 words)**

President Trump has an opportunity to enhance his legacy by standing up for press freedom -- something Joe Biden is unlikely to do.

America is divided. We have wasted much of the past four years arguing with each other in unproductive ways. If we want to improve our national dialogue, we need free, fair, and unbiased media to help facilitate the exchange of ideas. President Trump can further that goal by pardoning WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and whistleblower Edward Snowden.

Old Media fails us today, serving as echo chambers for partisan bickering. It failed us in the run-up to the war in Iraq. It failed us during the Obama-Biden years, when brave whistleblowers had to put their freedom on the line to keep us informed about illegal spying. The Obama-Biden administration launched more whistleblower prosecutions than all previous administrations combined. Biden even called Assange “a high-tech terrorist.”

We need an informed public and a free press. People like Assange and Snowden take those needs seriously. They shouldn’t be locked up. President Trump should pardon Assange and Snowden before Biden takes office. He would be restoring American values and enhancing his legacy, and the world would be a much better place for it.

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### **#3: To Counter the Liberal Media, Trump Should Pardon Assange (250 words)**

For years, President Trump has slammed the “fake news” media. Sometimes these attacks are a bit over the top, but he has a point.

Turn on any major cable news network and you’ll find yourself in an echo chamber of like-minded talking heads without much diversity in viewpoints or topics discussed. Most mainstream journalists lean toward the left. Pulitzer Prize winner Glenn Greenwald -- a liberal himself -- has even blasted the media for being so fixated on ideology that they fail to investigate important stories that might hurt Democrats, such as the Hunter Biden allegations.

Whatever your political perspective, you should support a free press and an open political conversation. The mainstream media’s bias and fascination with ratings led to its failure to keep the American people informed about the truth. As a result, alternatives like WikiLeaks emerged, where inside sources could disclose important information. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is being prosecuted for his role in publishing material from Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning. Those leaks led to major stories, journalism awards, and changes in public opinion. They were important. American citizens had a right to know what was going on.

I don’t expect the liberal media to be as aggressive in covering a Biden presidency. This could lead to corruption and criminality going unnoticed. One remedy for that would be for President Trump to cement his legacy as a champion of free speech and pardon Julian Assange. This would protect our rights at a time when we most need them.

### **#4: To Counter the Liberal Media, Trump Should Pardon Assange (199 words)**

For years, President Trump has criticized the “fake news” media. Sometimes these attacks are a bit over the top, but he has a point.

Watch cable news and you’ll find an echo chamber of like-minded talking heads and little diversity in viewpoints or topics discussed. Most mainstream journalists are liberals. Pulitzer Prize winner Glenn Greenwald (a liberal himself) has slammed the media for refusing to investigate important stories that might hurt Democrats, such as the Hunter Biden allegations.

Whatever your political perspective, you should support a free press and an open political conversation. The mainstream media’s bias and obsession with ratings caused its failure to keep the American people informed about the truth. As a result, alternatives like WikiLeaks emerged, where inside sources could disclose important information. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is breaking major stories the public had a right to know about. He won awards and changed public opinion. Now the government wants to lock him up.

I don’t expect the liberal media to cover Biden’s presidency aggressively. This could lead to hidden corruption. One remedy would be for President Trump to pardon Julian Assange and take a powerful stand on press freedom when we need it most.

### **#5: Return to Decency by Restoring the Freedom of the Press (242 words)**

One thing I look forward to in a Biden administration is a renewed respect for the freedom of the press.

President Trump’s War on Journalism has been culturally divisive. It’s one thing when we disagree about policy. When can move past those heated disagreements and find common ground on other topics. But Trump fueled a rift in our society by undermining truth itself. By demonizing the press as “fake news” whenever it criticized him, Trump turned the lunatic fringe into the mainstream.

Instead of passionate disagreements, we now cannot even agree on what is real and what is fake.

I hope that the Biden administration returns to decency in this area, but also on a topic that hasn’t been covered much. President Obama’s Justice Department investigated WikiLeaks after the Chelsea Manning leaks, but determined that prosecuting reporters and publishers would strike at the heart of the First Amendment. Even though they were concerned about sensitive information being made public, they realized there was no way to go after WikiLeaks without triggering “the New York Times problem”: opening the door to criminalizing all journalists working with inside sources or publishing stories that embarrass the government.

When Trump took office, he tossed aside that opinion and launched an unprecedented indictment against WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange. Hopefully, Biden will set us on safer ground and drop this prosecution. It is a longshot to hope for Trump, in his final days, to do the right thing.

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#### **#6: Return to Decency by Restoring the Freedom of the Press (191 words)**

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When Trump took office, he tossed aside that opinion and launched an unprecedented indictment against the publisher. Hopefully, Biden will set us on safer ground and drop this prosecution. It is a longshot to hope for Trump, in his final days, to do the right thing.

### **#7: We Need a New Approach to Press Freedom (264 words)**

It’s hard to ignore how divided we are as a people. It goes beyond which political parties we support or our views about the federal budget. We cannot even seem to agree on what’s real and what’s fake anymore.

There’s plenty of blame to go around. Instead of talking to each other, we demonize the other side. Instead of engaging in a debate, we retreat to echo chambers on cable news or the internet.

Returning to a more productive public dialogue starts with respecting a key part of our democracy: the press. Let’s stop dismissing every news story that hurts “our side” as “fake news.” Let’s start thinking critically about breaking news instead of reflexively labeling things “disinformation.” Let’s stop trying to kill the messenger.

That might seem like an exaggeration. When we don’t like the news, we usually just change the channel. But the government is taking steps to criminalize investigative journalism. The Justice Department indicted WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on charges that could lead to 175 years in prison. Journalists, legal scholars, and human rights groups say the case would set a dangerous precedent. If the government can prosecute Assange, experts say they could go after any reporter who works with inside sources and any publisher whose stories embarrass the government.

This is the heart of journalism: sharing truthful information that the public has a right to know. If we want to have a better debate in this country, let’s start by respecting those who try to give us the information we need to form our opinions. Let’s not kill the messenger.