

Colorado Capitol Press Association

BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

With limited exceptions set out in the rules of the Colorado House of Representatives and the Colorado Senate, the general public does not have access to the floor of either chamber while those bodies are in session.

One of the exceptions is for journalists accredited by the House and the Senate. Accredited journalists may sit at the press table in either chamber and sit or stand along the benches around the perimeter of each chamber. Subject to House and Senate rules and such additional restrictions as may be imposed by the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, the Chief Clerk, the Secretary and the House and Senate sergeants-at-arms, accredited journalists may request and conduct interviews with legislators on the floor. This level of access is a privilege not granted to journalists in many other state Capitols.

The Colorado Capitol Press Association was organized at the request of legislative leadership to recommend journalists to the speaker of the House and the president of the Senate for accreditation. The association's recommendations are routinely honored. Desiring to minimize the potential for politicization of the accreditation procedure, legislative leadership believes those best qualified to uphold high journalistic standards are the journalists themselves.

Legislative intent in granting floor access to journalists is to facilitate full and fair coverage of the deliberations of the Colorado General Assembly by newspapers, television stations, radio stations, Internet outlets and other mass media. It is contrary to the intent of the General Assembly that journalists given floor access should politicize the press tables by engaging in lobbying, advocacy, electioneering, partisan activity or vote-whipping. These activities or any other conduct intended to influence the proceedings of the General Assembly will be cause for revocation of accreditation. Furthermore, legislative leadership has reserved the right to bar all journalists from the House and Senate floors.

HOW TO JOIN THE COLORADO CAPITOL PRESS ASSOCIATION

Applications for accreditation for media outlets are handled by the Colorado Capitol Press Association, which makes recommendations to the House and the Senate. Except for temporary credentials, non-members of the association will not be granted accreditation.

All media outlets seeking association membership and admission for their employees to the House and Senate floors must submit a completed application form to a member of the Association's Standing Committee of Correspondents. Application forms are available online at www.leg.state.co.us and can be emailed to CoCapitolPress@gmail.com.

All new applications will be presented to the members of the Standing Committee for their review. The support of a majority of Standing Committee members is required for a favorable recommendation. Applicants might be issued temporary credentials for use until the Standing Committee next meets.

The Standing Committee will submit each application to the House and Senate with a favorable or unfavorable recommendation. The House and Senate will rule on each application and forward their decision to the Standing Committee, which will notify each applicant.

Individuals granted floor access must purchase a 1.5-inch by 3-inch badge with a purple background listing their name and media outlet. This badge must be worn to gain access to the floor of the House and Senate and, as a courtesy to members of the Legislature, should be worn in committee rooms and throughout the Capitol building when the Legislature is in session.

Photographers and camera crews from organizations that are members of the Colorado Capitol Press Association may wear a generic badge reading "Photojournalist" and the name of the publication or television channel.

Journalists who come to the Capitol sporadically to cover the Legislature can apply for temporary credentials from a member of the Standing Committee. If they demonstrate they meet the association's criteria, Standing Committee members can issue temporary press stickers, which must be worn to gain access to the House and Senate floors.

Journalists who do not hold association credentials may access any area of the Capitol open to the public, including committee hearings, and the Senate and House galleries.

Get an application form online at www.leg.state.co.us.
Forms can be emailed to CoCapitolPress@gmail.com