

VOA and the Firewall – Law for More than 40 Years

The firewall derives from laws passed by the U.S. Congress to ensure the integrity of VOA's journalism. Standards were first codified in 1976 in the VOA Charter; they were reinforced in laws passed in 1994 and in 2016 to prevent any undue influence or pressure on VOA by another U.S. government agency or official.

1976 – The VOA Charter signed into law by President Gerald Ford states:

- VOA will serve as a **consistently reliable and authoritative source of news**. VOA news will be accurate, objective, and comprehensive.
- VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American society, and will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions.
- VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively and will also present responsible discussions and opinion on these policies.

1994 – The U.S. International Broadcasting Act states that U.S. international broadcasting shall:

- Be conducted in accordance with the **highest professional standards of broadcast journalism**

- Include **news which is consistently reliable and authoritative, accurate, objective, and comprehensive**
- Include a balanced and comprehensive projection of United States thought and institutions, reflecting the diversity of U.S. culture and society

2016 – Congress affirms these standards in the National Defense Authorization Act which states:

- The Secretary of State and (BBG) Chief Executive Officer, in carrying out their functions, will respect **the professional independence and integrity** of the Board, its broadcasting services and the grantees.
- The Inspector General of the State Department and Foreign Service shall **respect the journalistic integrity of all the broadcasters** covered by this chapter.