

**IN SUPPORT OF RESTORATION OF FULL FUNDING AND AUTONOMY FOR THE
VOICE OF AMERICA**

A Resolution of Witness

1 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

2

3 **WHEREAS** Voice of America (VOA) is the largest U.S. international broadcaster, providing
4 news in 50 languages to more than 354 million people via digital, television and
5 radiobroadcasts¹; and

6

7 **WHEREAS** VOA was established in 1941 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, as the U.S.
8 Foreign Information Service, with the goal of broadcasting unfiltered news and information to
9 people living in countries, the first of which being Germany, which were under the grip of
10 totalitarian regimes²; and

11

12 **WHEREAS** during World War II, when VOA was broadcasting to the German people in
13 German to counter the Nazi propaganda machine, the Nazis tried suppressing VOA by jamming
14 its signals³; and

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16 **WHEREAS** during the Cold War after World War II, the communist leaders of the Soviet Union
17 and China sought to silence VOA⁴; and

18

19 **WHEREAS** since the end of the Cold War, the ayatollahs in Iran and the Kim family in North
20 Korea have also sought to block out VOA⁵; and

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22 **WHEREAS** on VOA's 15th anniversary, President Dwight D. Eisenhower used the broadcast to
23 address those living behind the Iron Curtain, saying, "We want your friendships;"⁶ and

24

25 **WHEREAS** in 1963 VOA transmitted live coverage of the March on Washington, broadcasting
26 Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech to a global audience⁷; and

27

28 **WHEREAS** VOA has earned worldwide respect by broadcasting honest and accurate news and
29 information coming out of the United States of America without regard to whether that
30 information is complimentary or critical of American policies and activities⁸; and

31

32 **WHEREAS** VOA's coverage of Watergate during the 1970s made a big impression even on
33 those living in the Soviet Union who were surprised that a news broadcast funded by the United
34 States would offer a critical lens on the American government⁹; and

35

36 **WHEREAS** VOA follows the guidelines set by its charter, which require its reporting to be
37 "accurate, objective and comprehensive," and which includes a mandated firewall prohibiting
38 government officials from influencing its editorial decisions¹⁰; and

39

40 **WHEREAS** today VOA is operated by the US Agency for Global Media, which is funded by
41 Congress and oversees all nonmilitary, international broadcasting, including the operations of
42 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, Radio Free Asia, the Middle
43 East Broadcasting Networks and Open Technology Fund¹¹; and
44

45 **WHEREAS** across all of its networks the Agency of Global Media provides news in
46 64languages to more than 427 million people¹²; and
47

48 **WHEREAS** Steve Herman, VOA's chief national correspondent, has referred to VOA as
49 "...probably the best bang for our buck that we have in terms of public diplomacy," adding that
50 **VOA is "... the hard edge of soft power;"¹³ and**
51

52 **WHEREAS** in early March, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order to reduce VOA's
53 parent agency by the maximum extent allowed by law, with the White House calling VOA
54 **"radical propaganda;"¹⁴ and**
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56 **WHEREAS** also in early March, 2025, Kari Lake of Arizona, who President Trump installed as
57 senior advisor at the U.S. Agency for Global Media, suspended VOA's journalists and cut off
58 transmissions, silencing the network for the first time in 83 years¹⁵; and
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60 **WHEREAS** before it was silenced, VOA was reaching nearly 360 million people around the
61 **world every week and broadcasting in nearly 50 languages¹⁶;**
62

63 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church
64 of Christ calls on the presidential administration to restore full funding to the US Agency for
65 Global Media.
66

67 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of
68 Christ calls on the President of the United States to reinstate all suspended journalists of the
69 Voice of America, freeing them to resume their critically important work on behalf of freedom,
70 justice and witness worldwide, maintaining journalistic integrity and editorial independence.
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72 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of
73 Christ calls on the United States Congress to reaffirm, by legislative action, America's
74 commitment to foster the dissemination of "accurate, objective, and comprehensive"¹⁷ news and
75 information around the globe.
76

77 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of
78 Christ encourages all United Church of Christ members, supported by the ministry of
79 congregations, Associations, and Conferences, to actively lobby U.S. Senators and members of
80 the U.S. House of Representatives, who represent them in Congress, to support the goals of this
81 resolution in accordance with the 1976 charter¹⁸ of the Voice of America.
82

83 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of
84 Christ acknowledges historical and ongoing political challenges exist related to the
85 implementation of Voice of America's mission, but recognizes that Voice of America has

86 provided an additional source of information in regions otherwise closed to the free press.

87

88 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fifth General Synod of the United Church of
89 Christ considers the mandates of the US Agency for Global Media and the Voice of America to
90 be consistent with the church's global ministry of justice and witness.

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92 **FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance
93 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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95 **IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries
96 and other entities of the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

97

¹ See *Voice of America: Mission, Firewall and Charter*; <https://www.insidevoa.com/p/5831.html>

² See *VOA Through the Years*; <https://www.insidevoa.com/a/3794247.html>

³ See *The History of Voice of America*; <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/voice-of-america-history-60-minutes/>

⁴ See *Jamming Free Speech from the VOA and BBC*; <https://voamuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/Jamming-Free-Speech-from-the-VOA-and-BBC-.pdf>

⁵ See *The History of Voice of America*; <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/voice-of-america-history-60-minutes/>

⁶ See *The American Presidency Project: World Broadcast in Observance of Fifteenth Anniversary of Voice of America*; <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/world-broadcast-observance-fifteenth-anniversary-voice-america>

⁷ See *VOA's Mission in the 1960s and 1970s*; <https://www.insidevoa.com/a/a-13-34-2007-mission-in-the-1960s-and-1970s-111602674/177528.html>

⁸ See *It Has Come to This: The U.S. will broadcast One America News*; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2025/05/08/trump-voa-kari-lake-oan/>

⁹ See *The History of Voice of America*; <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/voice-of-america-history-60-minutes/>

¹⁰ See *Voice of America: Mission, Firewall and Charter*; <https://www.insidevoa.com/p/5831.html>

¹¹ See *Trump slashes Voice of America with executive order, employees put on leave*; <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/03/15/trump-executive-order-voice-of-america/82443203007/>

¹² See *U.S. Agency for Global Media website*; <https://www.usagm.gov/>

¹³ See *Who Is Steve Herman and Why Donald Trump Wants Voice of America Journalist Fired?*; <https://www.timesnownews.com/world/us/us-news/who-is-steve-herman-and-why-donald-trump-wants-voice-of-america-journalist-fired-article-118127202>

¹⁴ See *What Is Voice of America and Why Trump Is Dismantling the Broadcaster*; <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/what-is-voice-of-america-and-why-trump-is-dismantling-the-broadcaster>

¹⁵ See *Kari Lake's new job: firing federal employees without authority*; <https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/news/kari-lakes-new-job-firing-federal-employees-voa-21405184>

¹⁶ See *'Discarded like a dirty rag': Chinese state media hails Trump's cuts to Voice of America*; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvgwzmqj9v34o>

¹⁷ See *Voice of America: Mission, Firewall and Charter*; <https://www.insidevoa.com/p/5831.html>

¹⁸ Ibid.