

From the Standing Committee minutes of February 27, 2004

TALON NEWS

The committee discussed an application from James Guckert, who writes under the name Jeff Gannon, of Talon News. Mr. Gallegos and Mr. Keenan briefed the committee on the rules that govern membership in the daily print galleries. Mr. Keenan said Talon News is an on-line news service owned by Bobby Eberle. He said Mr. Eberle told him Talon News is an all-volunteer news service, though since Mr. Guckert's application was submitted, a stipend was arranged that would provide more than half of Mr. Guckert's income in an effort to comply with the gallery's requirement that correspondents be paid, full time employees of the organization for which they are applying. Mr. Keenan said Talon News is the primary news supplier for GOPUSA, also owned by Mr. Eberle, and provides its news service at no charge to other organizations. He said Mr. Eberle plans to syndicate Talon News for profit in the future, and was told that currently, some revenue is generated by advertising. Mr. Keenan said information has been requested about Mr. Guckert's role as executive director of the Free Speech Foundation in order to determine whether it would conflict with gallery rules regarding paid promotion, publicity, and advertising. After discussing the rules and the application, the committee agreed that it lacked sufficient information to evaluate the application, and agreed to write a letter to Mr. Eberle seeking more information regarding the organization's relationship with GOPUSA, its corporate structure, and funding.

From the minutes of April 7, 2004

On a motion by Ms. Carey, seconded by Mr. Holland, the committee voted 5 to 0 to deny the application for credentials of James Guckert, who writes under the name Jeff Gannon, of Talon News.com. The committee agreed to notify the applicant by letter.

Dear Mr. Guckert:

At its meeting of April 7, 2004, the Standing Committee of Correspondents voted unanimously to deny your application for accreditation to the Congressional Press Galleries.

Press Gallery rules provide that applicants must establish to the satisfaction of the Standing Committee that they meet the committee's criteria.

Committee guidelines require that on-line publications "must charge a market rate fee for subscription or access, or carry paid advertising at current market rates." You have not demonstrated to the committee's satisfaction that Talon News has any paid subscribers, that paid client newspapers publish Talon News stories, or that it is supported by advertising.

The application for accreditation to the press galleries states that "members of the press shall not engage in lobbying or paid advertising, publicity, promotion, work for any individual, political party, corporation, organization, or agency of the Federal Government." Talon News has not demonstrated to the satisfaction of the committee that there is a separation from GOP-USA/Millions of Americans.com.

Gallery rules and the application state that the principal income of correspondents must be obtained from news correspondence intended for publication in newspapers or news services. The committee feels that paying a single reporter a "stipend" does not meet the intent of the rule.

You are invited to re-apply should Talon News' circumstances change, or if additional information becomes available.

Sincerely,

Jim Drinkard

Chairman