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May 7, 2012

William Murray  
President & Chief Operating Officer  
Public Relations Society of America  
33 Maiden Lane, 11th Floor  
New York, NY 10038-5150

Dear William:

It has come to my office's attention that a constituent in my district, industry journalist and publisher John R. O'Dwyer, has been banned from meetings of your national organization's governing body. I am further given to understand that your organization recently began charging O'Dwyer PR for access to events that is provided for free to other media outlets. I urge you to provide the same level of access for Mr. O'Dwyer and O'Dwyer PR as you to other members of the media covering your events.

The decision to ban Mr. O'Dwyer is deeply concerning, especially given your status as a tax-exempt industry trade association. Whatever the merits of your organization's and Mr. O'Dwyer's disagreements, he and his publication's reporting staff ought to be afforded fair access to events that are otherwise open to the press. I wholeheartedly agree with the National Press Club's statement of October, 2011:

Asking difficult questions designed to get answers that an organization would rather not provide is not disrupting an event. We would rather see a group like PRSA allow reporters who might write negative stories about them into their events than not. We think it sets a good example for their members whereas banning reporters does not.

We live in a world where journalist access is too often and too easily denied. We hope PRSA will reconsider their approach and decide next year to hold a convention that does not ban any reporters who wish to cover their activities.

I strongly encourage your organization to reconsider its position on this matter and change course.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Liz Krueger'.

Liz Krueger  
State Senator