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Dr. Larry Gross

*International Journal of Communication*

USC Annenberg School of Communication

3502 Watt Way

Los Angeles, California

90089-0281

Dear Dr. Larry Gross,

 We are submitting our manuscript titled, “How Journalists Think about the First Amendment Vis-à-Vis Their Coverage of Hate Groups” for consideration at *International Journal of Communication.*

 As the events of January 6th demonstrated in disturbing clarity, hate is a significant and, unfortunately, growing problem in the United States. Hate groups are growing in the country—up nearly 70 percent since the inauguration of the U.S.’s first black president Barack Obama. Yet, as is true in many countries, the operation of hate groups relies upon laws intended to prevent the stifling of free expression. In the U.S. this is represented in the First Amendment. The present study seeks to understand how journalists who cover hate groups think about their use of the First Amendment in their reporting. This is done through interviews with journalists who have covered at least one hate groups rally (n=18). We argue that journalists use the First Amendment as a measure of normative adherence to the field, even as many journalists struggled to understand how they could apply this media law in their own reporting.

 This is the first time this dataset has been considered and we believe this research contributes broadly to journalism and mass communication research. The current manuscript is approximately 7100 words. Thank you for considering our manuscript for *International Journal of Communication* and we hope to hear from you soon.

Regards,

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