The *New York Times* **editorialized today** about the need for **a federal media shield law** :

Without the ability of reporters and news organizations to protect confidential sources, many important reports about illegal, incompetent or embarrassing behavior that the government is determined to conceal would never see the light of day. In recent years, the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, the secret C.I.A. prisons in Eastern Europe for terrorists and warrantless wiretapping all came to light through the unauthorized disclosure of classified information.

If reporters can be hauled into court and forced to reveal their sources, it makes it hard for them to gain the trust of people who have information that the public needs to know, and it makes it hard for their news organizations to publish or broadcast those reports.