



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Cavendish Laboratory
Astrophysics
Cambridge CB3 0HE
sanjoy@mrao.cam.ac.uk

29 October 2005

Marc Brodsky
CEO and Executive Director
American Institute of Physics
One Physics Ellipse
College Park, Maryland 20740

Dear Marc Brodsky,

The enclosed petition asks the American Institute of Physics to reverse its dismissal of Jeff Schmidt from his job at *Physics Today*. It was signed by 22 people who attended a session of the Winter 2004 national meeting of the American Association of Physics Teachers. Due to an oversight, we did not send it to you at the time.

At the time of the meeting I was teaching an immovable lecture course in Cambridge, so I could not attend the meeting or sign the petition; however, I fully support it. Physics has traditionally welcomed dissenters, and we are mostly free to express our views without retaliation. Einstein, a socialist, was welcomed to America. Linus Pauling campaigned for nuclear disarmament and won a Nobel Peace Prize for it.

However, your firing Jeff Schmidt has caused me to revise my view. Yes, we may freely express our views *on issues that are distant*. But if we criticize the organization of society close to home, such as in the workplace, then the mask of freedom comes off.

Sincerely,

(signed) Sanjoy Mahajan