



**National Scholastic Press Association**

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The National Scholastic Press Association advocates the adoption of New Voices legislation across the country as sound educational practice.

The association, with its partner organization Associated Collegiate Press, represents thousands of high school and collegiate journalists and their journalism teachers and advisers. Its prestigious Pacemaker Awards honor the top student journalism in the country.

For those students, it is crucial to be challenged to produce responsible journalism. New Voices legislation protects their rights, and it supports the advisers and teachers who train them, critique them and challenge them to excel.

Our top student journalists gain invaluable skills. They research and report. They write and they edit. They create photos and illustrations. They produce audio and video. They learn about ethics and media law.

They excel in academic environments that protect their First Amendment rights, as they are guided to report with accuracy, fairness and responsibility.

A growing number of state governments — now 18 of them, across the country — have enacted New Voices legislation. Those laws expand rights and responsibilities provided by effective school districts that already engage their students to think, to edit and to discern information in all forms.

This educational process had been in place for decades until it was upended with a 1988 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*. That narrow decision gave administrators at public high schools the authority to squelch student expression, restrain content and even censor it. It undercut the trained teachers and advisers who teach students to be responsible. It has even been applied erroneously to some collegiate journalists, citizens of voting age, whose college administrations use draconian measures to harm their own students.

Wise educators, administrators, school-board members and parents engage their students through freedom. Journalism is no different from art, civics, debate, forensics, literature and theater. When students are given freedom in an environment of responsibility, they excel, from there into their post-secondary endeavors.

Students and educators not protected by such legislation are not just restrained and censored, they are burdened with a competitive disadvantage as they prepare to become effective citizens.

New Voices legislation is not a blank check for libel, for student journalists to hurt other students, for unrestrained freedom to do harm. It supports trained journalism educators and administrators who teach, train and challenge students to be both engaged and responsible. It protects student journalists to explore the issues of the day, to examine and report on controversies, to seek solutions, to help fellow students navigate the challenges of their school, their city, their state, their country and their world.

The National Scholastic Press Association and Associated Collegiate Press join the students, educators and parents who support New Voices legislation across the country.