



Resolution of the Board of Directors of the American Society of News Editors in Support of Legal Protection for Student Journalists and Advisers

WHEREAS the Mission Statement of the American Society of News Editors (“ASNE”) pledges, ASNE’s dedication to the leadership of American journalism; its commitment to fostering the public discourse essential to democracy; its desire to help editors maintain the highest standards of quality; its pledge to improve editors’ craft in order that they may better serve their communities; and its vow to preserving and promoting core journalistic values, while embracing and exploring change;

WHEREAS ASNE accomplishes this Mission by providing high-quality leadership training for emerging and established newsroom leaders; providing new ideas for shaping the craft of journalism; and promoting awareness of the First Amendment and the role of the press in society and supporting freedom of information efforts in newsrooms across the country and the world;

WHEREAS supporting and training the next generation of journalists is integral to achieving these goals and fulfilling ASNE’s Mission while, more importantly, benefitting society as a whole;

WHEREAS ASNE actively seeks to cultivate the next generation of journalists in many ways, such as including in its membership Deans or faculty at college or university journalism schools; providing training and resources for high school journalism advisers (as evidenced by ASNE’s creating the High School Journalism Institute which provided training to more than 2,340 secondary school teachers); and student journalists (as evidenced by ASNE’s creating Youth Journalism Initiative, launched in 2000 to help students learn why news matters and acquire the skills needed to succeed as 21st-century citizens);

WHEREAS a free and independent student media is an essential ingredient of a civically healthy campus community, conveying the skills, ethics and values that prepare young people for a lifetime of participatory citizenship.

WHEREAS journalism advisers at the secondary and post-secondary levels have been removed from their positions, subjected to disciplinary action and threatened in other ways, including but not limited to the removal of college and university advisers at Wayne State University (Michigan), Northwest College (Wyoming), Mt. St. Mary’s University (Maryland) in the last year alone, and excellent journalism advisers have been forced from their jobs at high schools including New Jersey’s Pemberton Township High School, Connecticut’s Shelton High School, and Tennessee’s Lenoir City High School;

WHEREAS student journalists are also subject to threats of disciplinary action and intimidation on a regular basis, which often threatens their growth as the next generation of journalists and productive citizens;

WHEREAS student publications are facing the withdrawal of financial support that threatens their existence, as evidenced by the defunding of publications at Delta State University (Mississippi), Wesleyan University (Connecticut), and the University of Redlands (California), among many others;

WHEREAS state legislation such as the New Voices Acts of Illinois, Maryland and North Dakota have all been passed into law in the last year, but similar legislation was introduced but not passed in Missouri, Rhode Island and Washington;

WHEREAS such legislation can and does protect student journalists and advisers against the acts of intimidation identified above and others taken in retaliation for exercise of students' and advisers' First Amendment rights;

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the American Society of News Editors, speaking on behalf of the entire Society, celebrates the enactment of the New Voices Act in Illinois, Maryland and North Dakota, as well as praising the other seven states that have enacted similar legislation in the past and calls upon those states who have not yet enacted these protections for the student media to do the same; and FURTHER expresses its support for the rights of the student media nationwide.