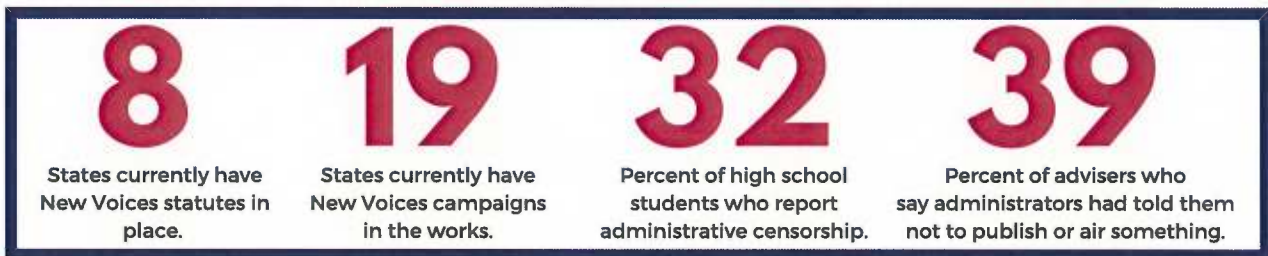


NEW ★ VOICES USA

New Voices USA is a student-powered grassroots movement to give young people the legally protected right to gather information and share ideas about issues of public concern. We work with advocates in law, education, journalism and civics to make schools and colleges more welcoming places for student voices. New Voices is a project of the Student Press Law Center, a nonprofit advocate for the rights of student journalists.

Our hope is that this bill will restore the Tinker standard of student expression in America's high schools. That standard protects student speech unless it is libelous, an invasion of privacy or creates a "clear and present danger" of a "material and substantial disruption" of the school.

New Voices Act legislation was inspired by the John Wall New Voices Act of North Dakota, which passed unanimously and became law in 2015.



Q: HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

There are several ways to get involved. Write to your senator and representative to encourage them to support - and even co-sponsor - the New Voices Act. Encourage your local media to do stories about the movement and to editorialize in favor of the bill or simply connect with New Voices on Facebook and Twitter to keep up to date on our efforts.

Q: HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF MY STATE HAS A CAMPAIGN?

Visit the New Voices USA website (newvoicesus.com) and use our State Tracker to find out if your state has a campaign and to find out how you can best get involved. If your state does not have a campaign and you would like to help start one, contact the Student Press Law Center at 202-785-5450.

Q: WHY IS NEW VOICES IMPORTANT?

Censorship is detrimental for students and society. Punishing students for their speech teaches them that censorship, often arbitrary and without limits, is acceptable. But in a society dependent on journalists and the public keeping the government in check, we cannot afford to have curiosity and confidence bred out of our students. We cannot afford to stifle today's new voices because they are tomorrow's media leaders and citizens.



For more information about your rights and responsibilities as a student journalist, contact the Student Press Law Center.
202-785-5450 - www.splc.org - splc@splc.org

Q: WHY DO STUDENTS NEED FREEDOM OF THE PRESS?

Students are the "embedded journalists" letting their communities know how effectively schools are performing. A Brookings Institution survey documents that just 1.4 percent of mainstream media is devoted to education news. If students are not free to disclose the shortcomings of their schools, the public is unlikely to find out. Study after study demonstrates that the only effective way of teaching civics in schools is for students to discuss contemporary political issues -- which is exactly what school censorship prevents. Research by the University of Kansas documents that students who work in newsrooms supportive of press freedom report higher levels of civic effectiveness -- the belief that they can use their voices to influence public policy.

Q: HOW DO NEW VOICES LAWS WORK?

A New Voices statute simply provides a common-sense list of the harmful material that a school can restrict from student media, including libel or obscenity. These laws give students a measure of protection beyond the floor set by the Supreme Court in its 1988 Hazelwood decision, which has been discredited by every journalism education organization in America as an excessive level of control. As the Society of Professional Journalists stated in a resolution calling on schools to enact more balanced policies, "it is well-documented the Hazelwood censorship clause impedes an educator's ability to adequately instruct and train students in professional journalistic values and practices."

Supplement to testimony Jan. 17, 2017. Chris Evans; chairman, New Voices VT.