PUTTING PRESS FREEDOM ON WHEELS

First Amendment awareness campaign rolls across America
THE STUDENT PRESS LAW CENTER VISION STATEMENT

THE STUDENT PRESS LAW CENTER WILL USE THE LAW TO HELP STUDENTS OF ALL AGES MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC LIFE AND LEARN ESSENTIAL SKILLS, ETHICS AND VALUES THROUGH THE VEHICLE OF JOURNALISM. THE SPLC WILL:

- CREATE GREATER AWARENESS OF, AND PROTECTION FOR, THE RIGHTS OF STUDENTS TO GATHER AND DISTRIBUTE NEWS AND COMMENTARY,
- PROVIDE TRAINING AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO USE THEIR VOICES TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY,
- EDUCATE THE ENTIRE EDUCATION COMMUNITY ABOUT THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO SHARE IDEAS, AND
- IMPROVE STUDENTS’ ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS AND MEETINGS, AND TEACH THEM TO PUT THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED TO PRODUCTIVE USE.

"The SPLC is 40 years old, but its work is as new as tomorrow’s smartphone app. As student journalism goes ‘digital-first,’ the legal uncertainties and phobias only get more confounding for schools, teachers and students alike. That’s why it’s doubly essential at this time of dramatic change in the way news is delivered and consumed that we maintain a well-funded center of expertise and knowledge to guide the student media. I’m a product of a college newsroom, and the skills and values I learned in that pressure cooker have stayed with me for a lifetime. Student journalism uniquely prepares young people for a lifetime of workplace success and meaningful civic participation. And student journalism needs a champion to make that survival case to policymakers. The SPLC is that champion."

Patrick Carome
Partner, WilmerHale LLP
Chairman, Board of Directors

"During 2013, we marked 25 years under the Supreme Court’s misguided ruling in Hazelwood, a decision that becomes more vividly wrong with each passing year. Just this past term, a Chicago-area school superintendent used the authority of Hazelwood to force high school editors to cancel an online forum where students could question candidates for school board, telling them: ‘Too much could go wrong.’ That’s where 25 years of Hazelwood has left us: With schools that start from a place of fear, expecting the least and fearing the worst. We can do so much better. That’s why the SPLC launched its ‘Cure Hazelwood’ campaign, and why we are working tirelessly to restore a sensible balance to student rights. Because we listen to kids every day, and we know the amazing things they can do when liberated from the intimidation of censorship."

Frank LoMonte
Executive Director

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Guyllyn Cummins

When the editor of the Saratoga, Calif. High School student newspaper, The Falcon, returned to school to start the 2013-14 school year, he had an unwelcome surprise waiting for him: A subpoena for his reporters’ confidential sources. With a response due in three days. His first call: the SPLC attorney hotline.

Within minutes, SPLC volunteer Guyllyn Cummins (right), a partner with SheppardMullin in San Diego and one of the nation’s leading media lawyers, was on the case. Overnight, she put together a letter explaining why the demand for the reporters’ notes was barred by California’s shield law. The law firm that issued the subpoena immediately withdrew it. For fighting to protect their sources, Falcon editors Samuel Liu, Sabrina Chen and Cristina Curcelli received the SPJ of Northern California’s First Amendment Award.

Liu gratefully told us: “You guys are real heroes.” And the 175 volunteers who make up the SPLC’s Attorney Referral Network are our heroes.
Tom Burke and Davis Wright Tremaine, LLP, saved the day for students at California’s Bear Creek High School, winning repeal of an unlawful “contract” under which students agreed to accept punishment for any “inappropriate” speech on off-campus social media.

Amanda Thrash of Doerner, Saunders, Daniel & Anderson, LLP, convinced the University of Central Oklahoma to rescind disciplinary sanctions against a journalism student wrongfully accused of “bullying” for writing on her blog that female students shouldn’t “play dumb” in class.

Daniel Levitas of Clements & Sweet LLP represented college newspaper editor David Schick in an open-records suit against the Georgia Board of Regents, which shook loose 700 pages of “lost” records.

“The man in black” celebrated his 10th anniversary with SPLC in September 2013. Marking the occasion, Goldstein told the SPLC’s Report magazine: “Every time I wake up and there’s a new opportunity to do good, I don’t see any reason to ever stop taking it.”
Making the difference, big and small.

The SPLC is a problem-solver that helps thousands of students and teachers each year with prompt, reliable and individualized legal assistance that’s always free. But we’re also a public-policy advocate helping reform the legal system to give journalists greater access to information and stronger protection when they gather and publish news. Our Strategic Plan focuses the SPLC’s advocacy on four interlocking priorities:

**Freedom of Expression**

Marking the 25th anniversary of the Supreme Court’s *Hazelwood* ruling that rolled back free-speech rights in schools, the SPLC secured passage of resolutions condemning reliance on the authority of *Hazelwood* from the nation’s largest organizations representing professional journalists (SPJ), journalism educators (JEA) and college journalism researchers (AEJMC). In the courts, SPLC helped secure a crucial legal victory in the Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals (*B.H. v. Easton Area School District*) curtailing schools’ authority to punish students for talking about breast cancer awareness – speech that a Pennsylvania school district attempted to ban as “lewd.”

**Open Government**

SPLC staff and volunteer attorneys won a huge victory for access to the records of powerful “quasi-public” school associations that seek to conceal their political maneuverings behind corporate status. In *Disabato v. South Carolina Ass’n of School Administrators*, the state Supreme Court ruled that government officials have no right to formulate education policy outside public view. In neighboring North Carolina, the SPLC led the way in advocating for enactment of one of the nation’s best police transparency laws, requiring private colleges to disclose crime reports to the public.

**Civic Participation**

The SPLC is helping policymakers understand the connection between protecting free expression and getting young people engaged in the civic life of the community. During 2013, SPLC presenters were featured at the nation’s biggest civics-education events, including the National Conference on Citizenship and the American Bar Association’s National Law-Related Education Conference.

**Online Citizenship**

The SPLC is a respected voice for sensible restraint in making public policy about online bullying. Executive Director Frank LoMonte was the only free-speech advocate invited to the Iowa Governor’s Bullying Prevention Summit in November 2013 and the Anti-Bullying Leadership Network’s June 2013 New York Conference on Bullying. SPLC used these opportunities to help the public appreciate the dangers of “lock-’em-up” bullying laws that punish “offensive,” “annoying” or “inappropriate” speech with suspension, expulsion and (in some states) even prison time.

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*SPLC thanks our amazing staff, interns, fellows and volunteers for making 2013 a triumphant year*

Adam Goldstein  
Sara Gregory  
Jennifer Kiel  
Kristine Hadeed  
Robert Kiel  
Daniel Moore  
Margaret Baum  
Allison Russell  
Mike Hiestand  
Beverly Keneagy  
Sara Tirrito  
Kaitlin Tipsword  
Samantha Sunne  
Samantha Vicent  
Sydni Dunn  
Taylor Moak
The SPLC helps students break the news their communities need to know

- **At the University of Alabama**, where Mazie Bryant, Abbey Crain and Matt Ford of *The Crimson White* shattered decades of silence about the exclusion of black women from sororities. Their searing story, “The Final Barrier,” was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

- **At Otterbein University**, where Chelsea Coleman and Katie Taggart exposed their school’s unlawful practice of requiring rape victims to sign a “confidentiality agreement” as a precondition of opening a disciplinary investigation against their assailants.

- **At Purdue University**, where an SPLC attorney got campus police to promptly release a student photographer’s illegally seized cameras so *The Exponent* could provide timely and complete coverage of a fatal classroom shooting.

**THE TINKER TOUR KEEPS FREEDOM ROLLING**

Thirty-one states. 24,390 miles. More than 200,000 people reached. The SPLC-sponsored “Tinker Tour,” featuring SPLC attorney Mike Hiestand and civil-liberties legend Mary Beth Tinker, got America buzzing about student speech rights. With help from the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation, the Tour — a First Amendment pep rally on wheels — launched from Philadelphia’s National Constitution Center on Constitution Day 2013 and, in early 2014, reached the West Coast. At each stop, Mary Beth and Mike evangelized about the positive social change young people can make when they use their voices wisely. “You inspired me to express myself,” one Detroit eighth-grader wrote after the Tinker RV came through town. A journalism teacher in Overland Park, Kansas, summed it up: “You gave our students an ‘a-ha’ moment.” The Tinker Tour highlighted a year of SPLC awareness events keyed to the 25th anniversary of the Supreme Court’s *Hazelwood* decision, which also included a *Hazelwood* retrospective at American University’s Washington College of Law and a special edition of the *First Amendment Law Review*.
“The SPLC was able to ensure we would not face a legal battle upon publishing one of our larger and more important stories in recent memory. The SPLC’s work with student newspapers like ours is extremely beneficial, and it is comforting to know this group is available to have students' backs.”

Colin Likas
Editor-in-chief, The Collegian, Butler University
Winner, 2013 IRE Award for Investigative Reporting

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