Student Press Freedom Day 2019

*The Student Press Law Center and Issuu announce the*

*We Are Not The Enemy Impact Fund*

WASHINGTON — Today, as part of Student Press Freedom Day, the Student Press Law Center, with lead donor Issuu, is announcing the creation of the We Are Not the Enemy Impact Fund.

Created by a consortium of funders who believe strongly in the First Amendment rights of students, the We are Not the Enemy Impact Fund will help support student journalists or media advisers create projects to investigate, amplify or address challenges to student journalism. The Fund will provide small grants to current students or journalism/media advisers to help document and address the importance of student journalists and the struggles they face.

“This fund will enable student journalists and media advisers to tell their stories to a wider audience – not the stories they report, but the experiences they have as journalists in an era where their every move is questioned and, sometimes, censored” said SPLC executive director Hadar Harris. “We are grateful to Issuu for their financial leadership in creating this fund and their ongoing commitment to student press freedom.”

Issuu CEO Joe Hyrkin noted, “We believe that young journalists are the future in the same way that digital publishing is. Student journalism is a critical outlet for young people to express their views, raise their voices and incite real change.”

Student journalists play a key role in the civic life of their community. Not only do they report on important issues in the life of a school or school district, but as the number of professional journalists have dwindled, student journalists often fill the gap in reporting on county, state and regional issues as
well. But student journalists and journalism education programs are under siege. Just as professional journalists are under a variety of pressures, with claims of “fake news” and accusations of being the “enemy of the people,” student journalists are subject to similar claims. The situation for student journalists is even more difficult because they are often subject to censorship, prior review, budget battles and other external pressures.

The Fund will provide small grants ($100 - $1500) to projects proposed by student journalists or media advisers to address, amplify, or investigate challenges to student journalism. These might include projects that focus on censorship, financial sustainability of student newsrooms, marginalization/threats to trust in student media, intimidation/harassment of advisers or the role that student journalists play in news deserts. Proposals may incorporate funding investigative journalism, creating events on campus focused on student press freedom, or creating concrete campaigns to raise awareness about the threats to student journalists.

The Fund will be launched as part of the Year of the Student Journalist. The Student Press Law Center will issue a Request for Proposals on its website (splc.org) in March, 2019, and will select its first cohort of grant recipients by April 15, 2019 with projects to be implemented in academic year 2019-2020.

For more information or if you would like to donate to the fund, please contact SPLC director of engagement, Diana Mitsu Klos at dmk@splc.org.

ABOUT THE STUDENT PRESS LAW CENTER

Since 1974, the Student Press Law Center (SPLC) has been defending and supporting the First Amendment and free expression rights of student journalists in the United States. Operating at the intersection of law, journalism and education, the SPLC fields nearly 2,000 inquiries each year on its free legal hotline from students and advisers, provides more than 60 training workshops per year, and provides a wide variety of online resources to student journalists and advisers at splc.org. The SPLC also engages in programmatic initiatives to promote New Voices student press protections and to amplify the destructive effects of censorship on student journalists. Based in Washington, D.C., the SPLC is an independent, staunchly non-partisan 501(c)(3).