



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 13, 2019

Contact: Diana Mitsu Klos, director of engagement (202) 728-7267/ dmk@splc.org

Student Press Law Center statement in support of *The Daily Targum* at Rutgers University

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Student Press Law Center stands by the student journalists of *The Daily Targum* as they seek funding to ensure the news organization’s survival.

The newspaper, established 150 years ago and independent of the New Brunswick-N.J. – based university since 1980, has received funding from student fees via a referendum held every three years.

While a majority of students voted in May to fund *The Daily Targum*, voter participation did not meet the university’s 25% threshold among its colleges and campuses. The paper is losing its \$11.25 per student per semester fee, or a projected \$540,000 in the coming school year. That is approximately 70% of the paper’s \$800,000 budget, Melissa Hayes, an alumni member of *The Daily Targum*’s Board of Trustees, told NJ.com.

Since 2017, the Rutgers Conservative Union has promoted a campaign to de-fund *The Daily Targum*.

SPLC welcomes the well-reasoned letter sent to university President Robert Barchi by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) which asserts that the referendum itself as well as the system that determines a student group’s eligibility for a funding referendum are unconstitutional. While we also welcome the GoFundMe campaign which has been launched to support the paper, we believe that full funding for the paper should be restored by the school.

The Daily Targum is the campus watchdog. Independent news organizations are necessary for a healthy democracy and civically engaged communities. As an organization that defends the First Amendment rights of student journalists, we raise our voice in support to a funding solution that will keep the *The Daily Targum* viable and independent, and stand poised to assist the student journalists as needed.

Since 1974, the Student Press Law Center has been the nation’s only legal assistance organization devoted exclusively to supporting the student news media in covering important issues free from censorship. The SPLC trains high school and college journalists about the rights and responsibilities embodied in the First Amendment and also works with journalism advisers and school administrators to support student media. A nonprofit, nonpartisan 501c(3), the SPLC provides free legal resources and information as well as low-cost educational materials for student journalists on a wide variety of topics at splc.org.

1608 Rhode Island Ave. NW Suite 211 Washington, DC 20036
202-785-5450 splc.org