

NEW VOICES

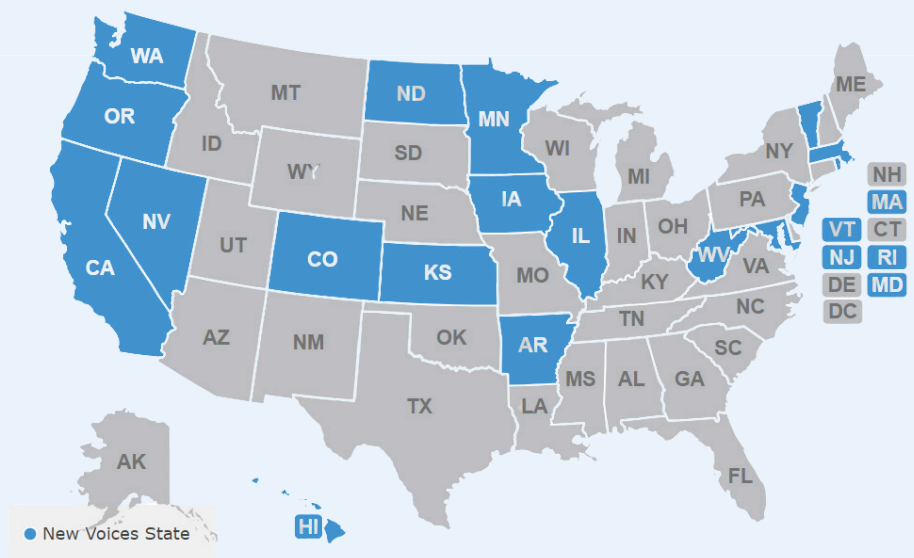
The New Voices movement works to protect student free press rights. New Voices is a nonpartisan, grassroots, student-driven effort to restore and protect student press freedom, especially that of high school students, at the state level and to prevent retaliation against advisers who stand up for student free press rights.

Without New Voices protections, school administrators can (and do) censor many student publications for any reason “reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns.” (*Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, 1988) Censoring students not only quells their engagement in the life of their community, but it sends a clear message that their voices are not valued and respected.

To date, 18 states have adopted New Voices protections and campaigns are underway in many more.

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WHAT IS NEW VOICES?

New Voices is a nonpartisan, grassroots, student-driven effort to restore and protect student press freedom and to prevent retaliation against advisers who refuse to infringe students' press rights. New Voices works with state legislatures to pass laws supporting these goals.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Student journalists want to tell the stories that impact their community, both on and off campus. But in 1988, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* that school administrators can censor student publications sponsored by the school when “reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns.” This vague standard has been interpreted to mean just about anything, and for more than a generation administrators have engaged in subjective and arbitrary censorship without an articulable “pedagogical concern.” Censored stories often address issues adults don’t want to discuss, are critical of the school administration, expose scandals in the school or just make the school “look bad.”

DON'T STUDENTS HAVE FIRST AMENDMENT PROTECTIONS ALREADY?

Students' First Amendment rights are not absolute. In its landmark 1969 decision *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District*, the U.S. Supreme Court said that neither "students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate." The “*Tinker* standard” protects student speech unless it is unlawful (for example, libelous, an invasion of privacy, creates a “clear and present danger,” etc.) or creates a “material and substantial disruption” of the school. But some student journalists have even fewer rights than the general student body. Where the First Amendment protects a free press, *Hazelwood* explicitly muzzles students solely because they are the press. College students do have more legal rights against censorship than secondary school students, but many are censored nevertheless.

WHO SUPPORTS NEW VOICES?

New Voices has been endorsed by a wide variety of organizations including the American Bar Association, the Journalism Education Association, the Society of Professional Journalists, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the National Council of Teachers of English and more.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN NEW VOICES?

Join the movement! New Voices is a nonpartisan, grassroots, student-driven effort. All are welcome. For more information on how to get involved, visit [**SPLC.org/new-voices/**](https://splc.org/new-voices/)