

HCS HB 576 -- CAMPUS FREE EXPRESSION ACT (Dohrman)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Higher Education

This bill establishes the "Cronkite New Voices Act," which provides that in both public high schools and public institutions of higher education a student journalist has the right to exercise freedom of speech and of the press in school-sponsored media.

The bill permits school districts and student-media advisors to regulate the number, length, frequency, and format of school-sponsored media. School districts must adopt a written freedom of the press policy that includes reasonable provisions for the time, place, and manner of student expression. The policy may also restrict speech that is offensive or threatening.

The bill forbids school districts from prior restraint of school-sponsored media except in circumstances specified in the bill.

This bill modifies the Campus Free Expression Act. The bill requires the governing board of each public institution of higher education to adopt a policy on free expression by January 1, 2020. The free expression policy must be consistent with several principles of free speech specified in the bill. The free expression policy shall be made available to students and faculty annually.

The bill also requires institutions to adopt a "student-on-student harassment" policy.

The bill shall not be interpreted as prohibiting an institution from imposing restrictions on expressions that do not violate the United States Constitution or the Missouri Constitution.

The bill requires a public institution that requires a faculty sponsor for student organizations to appoint an administrator as specified in the bill.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 2284 (2018).