

HCS HBs 743 & 673 -- CRONKITE NEW VOICES ACT

SPONSOR: Fishel

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 12 to 0.

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 is same as HB 673 (2019) and HB 1940 (2018).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will ensure appropriate press freedom for student newspapers and other communications. It is based on the Tinker v. Des Moines standard rather than some later precedents that have cut back on student expression and speech. Student papers follow standard journalistic standards and cannot engage in falsehoods and libel.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Fishel; American Civil Liberties Union; Rachel Pickett; Emily Hood; and Jack Rintoul, Missouri Press Association; Aaron Manfull; and Mitch Eden.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

This bill is the same as HB 673 (2019).