

HB 480 -- CRONKITE NEW VOICES ACT

SPONSOR: Christofanelli

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 17 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 the same as HB 2317 (2020) and HB 743 (2019).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill helps school districts develop a policy on the press and that in several states that have similar legislation there have been no lawsuits and that this bill will provide student journalists with more freedom to practice their journalistic craft with some safeguards.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Christofanelli; Amara Harper; Mitch Eden; Missouri NEA; and Missouri Press Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.