



**Arkansas Pro Chapter
Society of Professional Journalists**

Dear Rep. Lowery,

With the goal of promoting free and ethical journalism at all levels, the Arkansas Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists supports HB1231 to ensure freedom of expression for student journalists at public institutions of higher education.

Student media tracks the pulse of a college or university, by exploring institutional issues and breaking important stories that might otherwise be overlooked. Student media disseminates valuable information to the campus community and holds those in power accountable for their actions. When the rights of student journalists are compromised, student media declines and the campus suffers.

In addition, understanding the rights and responsibilities of journalists is a critical component of journalism education. Student journalists gain invaluable experience navigating these principles by participating in student media. Protecting freedom of expression on campus is essential to preparing these students for careers in the field.

Regardless of their stage of development, all journalists are guaranteed the right to free expression under the First Amendment. By outlining the rights of student journalists at public institutions of higher education, HB1231 protects those rights and provides recourse for those who feel their rights have been violated. Therefore, this bill is a prudent and essential addition to press law in Arkansas.

Respectfully,

Arkansas Pro Chapter
Society of Professional Journalists

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