

STATE OF NEW YORK

8333

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

June 8, 2017

Introduced by M. of A. PALMESANO -- read once and referred to the
Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to enacting the student
journalist free speech act

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assem-
bly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new article 18 to
2 read as follows:

ARTICLE 18

STUDENT JOURNALIST FREE SPEECH ACT

3 Section 860. Short title.

4 861. Definitions.

5 862. Student journalist free speech rights.

6 863. Exemptions.

7 864. Liability.

8 § 860. Short title. This article shall be known and may be cited as
9 the "student journalist free speech act".

10 § 861. Definitions. For the purposes of this article the following
11 terms shall have the following meanings:

12 1. "School official" means a high school principal or the designee of
13 such principal.

14 2. "School-sponsored media" means any material that is prepared,
15 substantially written, published, or broadcast by a student journalist
16 at a public school, distributed or generally made available to members
17 of the student body, and prepared under the direction of a student media
18 advisor. The term does not include media intended for distribution or
19 transmission solely in the classroom in which the media is produced.

20 3. "Student journalist" means a public high school student who gath-
21 ers, compiles, writes, edits, photographs, records, or prepares informa-
22 tion for dissemination in school-sponsored media.

23 EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
24 [-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 4. "Student media advisor" means an individual employed, appointed, or
2 designated by a school district to supervise or provide instruction
3 relating to school-sponsored media.

4 § 862. Student journalist free speech rights. 1. Except as otherwise
5 provided in section eight hundred sixty-three of this article, a student
6 journalist shall have the right to exercise free speech and of the press
7 in school-sponsored media, regardless of whether the media is supported
8 financially by the school district or by use of school facilities or
9 produced in conjunction with a class in which the student is enrolled.

10 2. Subject to section eight hundred sixty-three of this article, the
11 appropriate student journalist shall be responsible for determining the
12 news, opinion, feature, and advertising content of school-sponsored
13 media.

14 3. Nothing in this section shall preclude a student media advisor from
15 teaching professional standards of English and journalism to student
16 journalists.

17 4. There shall be no prior restraint of material prepared for official
18 school publications except for the material described in section eight
19 hundred sixty-three of this article.

20 5. School officials shall have the burden of demonstrating justifica-
21 tion without undue delay prior to a limitation of student expression
22 under this article.

23 § 863. Exemptions. The following forms of expression shall not be
24 protected by this article:

25 1. Expression that is libelous, slanderous or obscene;

26 2. Expression that constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy;

27 3. Expression that violates federal or state law; or

28 4. Expression that incites students to commit an unlawful act, to
29 violate the policies of the school district, or to materially and
30 substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the school.

31 § 864. Liability. No expression made by students in the exercise of
32 free speech or freedom of the press protected by this article shall be
33 deemed to be an expression of school policy, and no school district,
34 employee, parent, legal guardian or official of a school district shall
35 be held liable in any civil or criminal action for any expression made
36 or published by students, except in cases of willful or wanton miscon-
37 duct.

38 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.