

RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING PASSAGE OF HB 187: RELATING TO STUDENT JOURNALIST FREEDOM

WHEREAS, Journalism is a pillar of democracy, and a free press is protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the Bullitt County Board of Education believes that student journalists are important participants in the media ecosystem and are increasingly the only source of local and education news in their communities; their work creates an historical record of their generation's experiences, and provides an important service to the community; and

WHEREAS, The integrity and independence of journalists is a key tenet of their work and is guided by Codes of Ethics as determined by professional journalism and journalism education societies such as the Society of Professional Journalists; and

WHEREAS, the Kentucky Board of Education believes that censorship of student journalists contravenes the tenets of the First Amendment and the basis of a free and informed society and it undermines the role of education in producing engaged, civic-minded, critical thinkers; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court held in *Tinker vs. Des Moines (1970)* that students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gates" with only narrow and limited exceptions; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Hazelwood School District vs. Kuhlmeier (1988)* permits subjective and overbroad censorship of student journalists by school administrators and has been discredited by every journalist education association in America; and

WHEREAS, despite its essential role in the school community, student journalists' speech is held to a higher standard than other students on campus and is often censored for arbitrary and subjective reasons; and

WHEREAS; we believe student media advisers should not face retaliation, reassignment or termination for refusing to censor responsible and truthful student media; and

WHEREAS, Representative Attica Scott has introduced HB 187, a bill relating to student journalist freedom, to restore and protect the rights of student journalists and advisers; and

WHEREAS, The Act would prohibit the censorship of student journalists except in certain narrow circumstances in line with the standard established by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Tinker v. Des Moines*; and would protect from retaliation advisers who refuse to illegally infringe upon student journalists' press freedom;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That the Bullitt County School Board does hereby support HB 187 and the freedom of Kentucky's student media and ask the Kentucky General Assembly to support the Act and pass it, restoring and protecting the rights of student journalists and their advisers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to the Commissioner of Education and the elected House and Senate members of the Kentucky General Assembly.

Deborah Atherton, Chair (Date)

Jesse Bacon, Secretary / Superintendent (Date)