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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 848 (Substitute S-1 as reported)  
Sponsor: Senator Rick Jones  
Committee: Judiciary

## **CONTENT**

The bill would create the "Student Free Press and Civics Readiness Act" to do the following:

- Specify that a student journalist would have the right to exercise freedom of speech and of the press in school-sponsored media.
- Specify that the student journalist rights would not authorize or protect expressions that were libelous or slanderous, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, a violation of Federal or State law, or an incitement to create clear and present danger that students might commit an unlawful act, violate school policies, or disrupt the orderly operation of the school.
- Prohibit a public school or institution of higher education from authorizing prior restraint of expression in any school-sponsored media, except when the expression met any of the conditions described above.
- Require each public school or institution of higher education to adopt a written policy on student freedom of expression.
- Prohibit the dismissal of or other retaliation against a student media adviser for acting to protect the rights of a student journalist or refusing to act in a manner that would infringe upon a student journalist's rights under the proposed Act.
- Provide that the publication or expression of ideas by a student journalist would not be attributable to the school and that school districts, boards of education, public institutions of higher education, and their employees would not be responsible for such publications or expressions.

"Student journalist" would mean a student of a public school or a public institution of higher education who gathers, compiles, writes, edits, photographs, records, or prepares information for dissemination in school-sponsored media. "School-sponsored media" would mean any materials that are prepared, substantially written, published, or broadcast by a student journalist at a public school or public institution of higher education; distributed or generally made available to members of the student body; and prepared under the direction of a student media adviser. The term would not include any media intended for distribution or transmission solely in the classroom in which the media are prepared. "Student media adviser" would mean an individual employed, appointed, or designated by a public school or public institution of higher education to supervise or provide instruction relating to school-sponsored media.

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Date Completed: 3-23-16

Fiscal Analyst: Cory Savino

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Bill Analysis @ [www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa)

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