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The Constitution is the highest law in our nation. Congress is bound by it, Presidents must swear to defend it and the Supreme Court was founded in order to uphold and interpret its laws. It has turned an upstart group of colonies into one of the most powerful nations in the world, and guarantees the people of that nation the most basic and sacred of human rights—freedom to practice religion, freedom to express an opinion openly in the press and as spoken word, and the freedom to assemble and peaceably protest the actions of the government.

These rights are the birthright of the people of America, and yet we spurn the exercise of these freedoms for fear of offending others. This nation is increasingly becoming one of “political correctness” in which we fear that which might challenge us to think differently, or expand our horizons beyond our comfort zones. This has become especially evident in the student press. Censorship rights given to administrators by Hazelwood restricts the freedom of the high school press and limits the ability of student journalists to publish work that may have the potential to expand the minds of fellow students.

“Censorship, direct or indirect, is unacceptable; thus laws and practices restricting the right of the news media freely to gather and distribute information must be abolished, and government authorities, national or local, must not interfere with the content of print or broadcast news, or restrict access to any news source, “ (World Press Freedom Committee). This is no less true of the student press. School censorship does nothing to protect students who are constantly exposed to “sensitive” information through the media. It is more prudent to let students read about these issues in articles written by their peers. In this way, student’s journalists learn to tastefully discuss controversial subjects in the media, and the student body is more likely to respond to the information presented.

The student press should be given all of the rights and privileges afforded to the public press, lest we become nothing more than a propaganda tool for school administrations. Censorship has become an outmoded tool for ensuring “political correctness” and as such should be abolished. A free student press should, by definition, be genuinely student driven, because the Constitution guarantees the right to a free press to all people, regardless of age.