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March 19,2016

Dear Sen. Rick Jones:

Of the many recognitions Dexter High School has received during my 10 year tenure as principal, two awards are displayed in my office above my desk. One is the MIPA (Michigan Interscholastic Press Association) Administrator of the Year Award and the other is the SPLC (Student Press Law Center) Courage in Student Journalism Award. Nothing I have been able to do to help students in my 37 year career makes me prouder than those plaques.

This is the background I bring to my support for the passage of Senate Bill 848. There is not a time in our long American history when it is more important for us to teach students the power of the press and ensure their ability to be heard. While current candidates for political office speak of "punching people in the face" when they disagree with them, student press organizations continue to present a balance and student-side to issues in schools and their communities.

When Congress passed the Bill of Rights to the Constitution and made this the FIRST Amendement:
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances, it was not done accidentally. Our Founding Fathers recognized over 220 years ago how important this right would continue to be in a democracy.

Our legislators in Lansing now have the ability to make permanent and clarify many issues surrounding student journalism. During my time as a principal at Dexter High School I have never been let down by our student journalists. Our mission, if nothing else, is to teach students to THINK. Students journalists, editors, and advisors do this on a daily basis. We must protect this amazing institution.

Please do your part to help SB 848 pass. It means more than you can imagine to student journalists across the state and journalism as a whole.

Professional yours,

William C. Moran

William C. Moran
Principal
Dexter High School