



## Teens rally to ‘Stand for Speech’ in NYC



*Teens for Press Freedom, New Voices New York, and the Student Press Law Center hosted a rally in support of New York’s Student Journalist Free Speech Act.*

Teens for Press Freedom, New Voices New York, PEN America, Student Press Law Center, and approximately 40 high school students gathered in New York City to advocate for the passage of New York’s Student Journalist Free Speech Act on June 13, 2021. The rally provided another opportunity for lawmakers to understand why the law is needed.

The “Stand for Speech” rally highlighted the censorship challenges facing student journalists. Speakers included Townsend Harris High School student journalists Victoria Oei and Samantha Sestak along with Teens for Press Freedom co-founders Charlotte Hampton and Isabel Tribe. They were joined by Manhattan District Attorney candidate Tahanie Aboushi, SPLC board member and First Amendment attorney Ava Lubell, and Katina Paron with Hunter College, and author of “A NewsHound’s Guide to Student Journalism”.

The standard established in **Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier (1988)** gives school administrators the ability to censor students ‘for any reasonable pedagogical purpose’. It provides entirely too much control over their student’s speech and activities by being vague and subjective. Administrators have used the ambiguity to censor political commentary counter to their beliefs and quell conversations regarding controversial yet important events and ideas. The Student Press Law Center’s free legal hotline supported hundreds of student journalists over the last year facing challenges to their work regarding racial justice protests, COVID-19 response, and sexual misconduct by school staff.