

By: Patterson

H.B. No. 845

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to prohibiting a public institution of higher education from providing financial support to nonprofit media organizations.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the Free Press Act.

SECTION 2. Subchapter 2, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 51.980 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.980. FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF NONPROFIT MEDIA ORGANIZATION PROHIBITED. (a) In this section, "institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(b) Notwithstanding any other law, an institution of higher education may not use funds from any source to provide financial support, including through the purchase of a membership, sponsorship, or advertising services, to a media organization that is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, by being listed as an exempt organization in Section 501(c)(3) of that code.

SECTION 3. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section, Section 51.980, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies only to an expenditure of funds that is made on or after the effective date of this Act.

(b) Section 51.980, Education Code, as added by this Act, does not affect an expenditure of funds made under the terms of a contract entered into before the effective date of this Act. An

1 expenditure of funds made under the terms of a contract entered into
2 before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in
3 effect on the date the contract was entered into, and the former law
4 is continued in effect for that purpose.

5 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.