

Journalism Educators Urge Wisconsin Lawmakers to Support — not Condemn — the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism

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The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), which comprises more than 3,700 JMC students, professors and administrators in the U.S. and abroad, is dismayed at the Wisconsin's Legislative Joint Finance Committee's misguided attempt to ban the nonpartisan and nonprofit Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism (WCIJ) from maintaining its office on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus.

Particularly egregious is the Wisconsin legislative committee's further attempt to prohibit journalism faculty members at UW-Madison from working with the WCIJ, which illustrates an exemplary case of academic-professional collaboration, and which should be a model for other journalism programs nationally and internationally. Such an ill-considered attempt is a clear violation of academic freedom, which is required to safeguard open inquiry and the creation of knowledge. We need more investigative reporting than ever in an age of ever-shrinking independent journalism due to financial constraints facing the news media as a whole.

Democracy is harmed when the state interferes with the communication of knowledge that informs public opinions. As journalism educators, we are unwaveringly committed to instilling in our students a critical appreciation for a free and independent press and for the crucial role of the news media in monitoring, on behalf of the public, the conduct of government officials. To preserve self-government, we must ensure citizens' access to knowledge. More access to information, not less.

The Wisconsin's Legislative Joint Finance Committee's politically motivated motion to undermine the educational and non-educational value of the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism is fundamentally antithetical to the role of journalism in our democracy as well as its professional education in the United States. We strongly urge the Wisconsin state legislators to reconsider the motion immediately.

The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) is a nonprofit, educational association of journalism and mass communication educators, students and media professionals. The Association's mission is to advance education, foster scholarly research, cultivate better professional practice and promote the free flow of communication. To find out more about AEJMC, please visit www.aejmc.org.