

The Connecticut chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists urge the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee to go beyond the disclosure requirements in **SB 333**, *AN ACT CONCERNING THE FOUNDATION OF CONSTITUENT UNITS AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION*.

The committee should instead make the University of Connecticut foundations and those at other public institutions of higher education subject to the state's Freedom of Information Act. Such foundations rely on the names of public colleges and universities to generate millions of dollars in donations annually, yet the public has no way to ensure the money is going to the proper uses.

In just the last 10 years, foundations for the City College of San Francisco, the Los Angeles Trade Technical College and the College of DuPage in Illinois have all been involved in scandals involving accusations against school officials. This is not to say that either UConn or its Foundation, or any similar organization in Connecticut, have been involved in similar misconduct, but the public can't know without access to information.

Officials have warned that requiring them to adhere to the FOI Act will hurt their ability to fundraise, but the evidence points to the contrary. University foundations around the country thrive despite being subject to the public disclosure laws of their states, as OLR has highlighted in multiple reports.

While the bill, as written, might appear to be a compromise, it doesn't provide public access to any information that would allow the public to ensure the Foundation is acting with honesty and integrity.

- Paul Singley, president of the Connecticut Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists