

To the Students Publishing Company Board of Directors:

We are writing to express our disappointment with the events that have transpired since the tampering of The Daily Northwestern's Oct. 23, 2023, print paper.

In a letter to the editor published in student magazine North by Northwestern on Friday, 89 student organizations, faculty and other Northwestern affiliates [called on SPC](#) to drop charges against two Black students implicated in the distribution of the imitation copies. As of Sunday night, over 5,500 people have signed a Change.org petition [opposing the charges](#) on the grounds that "As members of the Northwestern community — an environment that has proven time and time again its hostility to its students — we have a duty to protect each other and refuse to be silenced."

Flyers posted around campus and other online sources, aside from promoting the petition, further criticize SPC and call on Daily staffers to stand against the charges. Several Daily reporters have also received direct communications concerning the prosecution of these two students and SPC's perceived role in the charges.

The Daily's editorial board acknowledges that the Cook County State's Attorney's Office possesses the sole discretion to bring or dismiss criminal charges. That being said, based on legal advice that we have received from a Northwestern law professor specializing in Illinois criminal law, we are confident that, if SPC notifies the office that it no longer has an interest in seeing the suspects prosecuted, the prosecutor will likely choose to drop charges.

The effects of this situation are already damaging our ability to run the paper effectively. In a boycott letter scheduled to be published in today's print edition of The Daily, over 60 organizations have vowed not to speak with Daily reporters until the charges are dropped. Included in these organizations are several affinity groups, performing arts groups — including the entirety of the Student Theatre Coalition — and large student organizations like Mayfest and A&O Productions, completely hindering the Campus and Arts & Entertainment Desks' work and damaging sourcing relationships some of us have worked years to create and cultivate. Even after current staffers have graduated from Northwestern, SPC's involvement in this matter will continue to adversely impact The Daily's relationships with marginalized groups on campus and our ability to accurately report on communities of color.

After months of preparation and effort, we were also forced to withdraw from moderating the ASG presidential debate — one of our most successful annual events — due to opposition to The Daily's presence from candidates and ASG. If our avenues to report on our community continue to dwindle, our ability to regularly publish content and produce two print newspapers per week will be called into question, threatening SPC's ability to collect advertising revenue. We also

believe this may hinder our ability to recruit new staffers — particularly staffers of color — in the future, especially if the boycott continues.

Several Daily alumni have also expressed their unwillingness to donate to The Daily unless SPC takes steps to mend the situation. The longer this drags on, and the more attention it garners, the more we are concerned it will negatively affect our ability to write, report and produce The Daily.

Most importantly, as members of the Northwestern student body, the undersigned members of The Daily’s editorial board are strongly opposed to the criminal prosecution of two of our peers.

We acknowledge that the students’ alleged actions violated Illinois law and posed potential obstacles to SPC’s financial responsibilities. The false front pages also posed significant personal and professional challenges for The Daily’s staffers, and we recognize that members of our newsroom community found their content objectionable. That being said, we also recognize that involving the police and the legal system endangered the safety of our peers. We feel that the potential reputational or financial recourse that could be gained from criminal prosecution does not warrant the harm that may be inflicted on these two students — including potential jail time, financial difficulties and loss of future opportunities due to a permanent criminal record. Our newspaper has always prided itself on its commitment to informing and supporting students, and we believe our publisher should play no part in perpetuating harm against the communities that we aim to serve.

Considering the harm that this situation has caused The Daily’s obligation to foster open expression, the ability of student journalists to freely report on their campus community, and — most importantly — to two Black members of the Northwestern student body, **we are calling on the board to reach out to the State Attorney’s office and ask that they drop the charges.** Although we are aware that this case has developed for several months and that SPC’s involvement in each of these steps has been varied, our editorial board asks that SPC makes any and all possible efforts to de-escalate the criminal prosecution of the two students.

If these demands are not met in a timely manner, we are prepared to consider a possible walkout. We look forward to receiving your formal response by the end of the day on Tuesday, Feb. 6.

Signed,

Avani Kalra, Editor in Chief
Lily Carey, Print Managing Editor
Colin Crawford, Print Managing Editor

Shannon Tyler, Print Managing Editor
Jacob Wendler, Print Managing Editor
Ashley Lee, Digital Managing Editor
Micah Sandy, Digital Managing Editor
Nicole Markus, Staff Managing Editor
Samantha Powers, Campus Editor
Casey He, City Editor
Lexi Goldstein, A&E Editor
Jake Epstein, Sports Editor
Ethan Lachman, Opinion Editor
Luis Castaneda, Video Editor
Anita Li, Audio Editor
Sonya Dymova, Photo Editor
Shveta Shah, Illustrations Editor
Saul Pink, Data Visualizations Editor
Paloma Leone-Getten, Design Editor
Jessica Ma, Audience Engagement Editor
Alyce Brown, Social Media Editor
Davis Giangiulio, Newsletter Editor
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Cole Reynolds, Development and Recruitment Editor
Ella Jeffries, In Focus Editor
Selena Kuznikov, In Focus Editor
William Tong, Diversity & Inclusion Chair
Erica Schmitt, Stipend Coordinator
Joyce Li, Assistant Campus Editor
Isaiah Steinberg, Assistant Campus Editor
Edward Simon Cruz, Assistant City Editor
Jackson Weier, Assistant A&E Editor
Chiara Kim, Assistant Opinion Editor
Anavi Prakash, Assistant Audio Editor
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