

- **Project Title:** Reporter's Privilege in Texas: How Daily Newspapers Cope  
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**Project Summary:**

The purpose of the study is to document how major daily newspapers in Texas practice journalism without the protection of a reporter's privilege, which allows journalists to keep sources and materials confidential. The study will also examine newspapers' policies and guidelines related to reporter's privilege. It will also continue the investigator's study of shield laws and reporter's privilege and contribute to scholarly research in this area.

Without a state shield law and in the face of often-hostile state courts, journalists at daily newspapers in Texas have developed policies and strategies to practice strong journalism.

Reporters and editors at four of the five largest daily newspapers in Texas were interviewed. Their attitudes about reporter's privilege -- and whether the state legislature should enact a reporter's shield law -- varied widely. Some editors and reporters said they needed a shield law to protect their sources and provide meaningful information to the public. Others said that since they have been practicing journalism without a shield law, they don't feel like one is needed.

Newspapers also had a variety of policies related to confidential sources. Some newspapers prohibited the use of confidential sources unless a high-level editor had been briefed and approved, while other newspapers required confirmation of the information through an independent, on-the-record source.

As Texas legislators continue to debate the need for a reporter's shield law, reporters and editors at the largest newspapers in Texas continue to practice journalism without that protection. Surveying these journalists provides insight into that debate.