



Carmage Walls
Commentary Prize

2019 Entry Form

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What is the subject/title of the entry? Political corruption in Arkansas

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Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation? Under 50,000

Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.)

Public corruption accusations have now netted prison sentences and fines for several former politicians. In this last year, our newspaper has purposefully maintained a call for stronger ethical standards among lawmakers and serious limits on any state funding program that gives individuals control of spending decisions. We' tried to support lawmakers who stood up for principled representation while calling out practices, such as loans among lawmakers that could be used to influence votes, for change. We have encouraged continued investigation to ferret out those who would take advantage of their positions of power.

It is often difficult to pinpoint direct changes arising from editorials, but the state Legislature has adopted new ethical standards. Legislative leaders took up the challenge to invoke integrity in their inaugural speeches. And we have attempted to use the power of our editorials to warn of the damage made possible through corruption and to encourage honest lawmakers to embrace their vital role as standard bearers. How much credit we deserve for changes is up for debate, but we're certain that our voice has been a vital part to setting Arkansas legislative culture on a better track.

