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New England **First Amendment** Coalition

*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."*

## New England Law | Boston forms NEFAC's second law school chapter

*Contact: Rosanna Cavanagh, executive director  
rosecavanagh.nefac@gmail.com  
401-331-7209*

BOSTON - Students at New England Law | Boston interested in the cause of open government have formed the second school chapter affiliated with the New England Freedom of Information Coalition.

Bob McGovern, a student with newsroom experience, is the chapter's president. He called NEFAC "a boon to journalism and individuals who seek public information."

"There were many times in the newsroom where I wished I had access to a resource like this. I am proud to be a part of this effort, and I believe the New England [Law](#) chapter will be a valuable endeavor for law students, the press and anyone seeking information they have a right to."

[NEFAC's](#) first school chapter was established at Suffolk University Law School in March.

"We are thrilled to launch our second law school chapter organization," said Rosanna Cavanagh, NEFAC's executive director.

"We believe this is an important way to engage the generation now coming of age in the quest for open government. We hope these law school chapters continue to spring up around New England. I invite any interested students or faculty members to contact me directly. "

McGovern majored in journalism at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he was sports editor of the Daily Collegian, a member of the rugby team and winner of the Doc Laurence award for leadership. He said the New England Law chapter now includes seven students. He plans to recruit more when school resumes.

After leaving UMass, McGovern multi-tasked as a sportswriter, reporter, paginator and photographer at the Hanson, Mass.-based, Express Newspapers, then moved West. A freelancing job with the Boulder County Business Report in Boulder, Colo., developed into a full-time position as managing editor.

He was interviewed for a sportswriting job with the Rocky Mountain News just before the newspaper folded. The next day he drove to a Barnes & Noble and bought an LSAT book.

He took the test a month later and that led him to New England Law.

"I went to law school because I wanted to get back into journalism on my terms, and I wanted to help newspapers during this crazy and unpredictable time," McGovern said.

He heard about NEFAC through a professor. He set to work organizing the chapter when he learned NEFAC is interested in recruiting law schools into the right-to-know campaign.

"I would like us to handle any and all legitimate freedom of information inquiries, particularly those coming from journalists that are being stonewalled. I was that journalist many, many times," he said.

Lawrence Friedman, a New England Law professor, said he's approached every year by students interested in constitutional law "and the New England Law chapter of NEFAC will be a great way for them to see how constitutional principles work in practice.

"I am particularly pleased that Mr. McGovern is leading this effort, as his background in journalism will prove invaluable."

NEFAC is a non-profit organization with a mission to expand public access to government and the work it does. Its board includes journalists, educators, activists and First Amendment lawyers from the six New England states.

**NEFAC** works in partnership with [Northeastern University's First Amendment Center](#) to further the cause of government transparency and the inter-relationship between the First Amendment and open government.

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NEFAC | 64 dunklee st. | concord | NH | 03301