

August 9, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

50 State Broadcasters Associations Support Local Journalism Sustainability Act (S. 2434)

Dear Leaders Schumer and McConnell,

The undersigned broadcaster associations representing local, over-the-air broadcast stations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico urge your consideration and passage of S. 2434, the Local Journalism Sustainability Act.

Local media outlets, including television and radio broadcasters, constitute a critical element of our nation's infrastructure. When a community is torn apart by a devastating natural disaster or attacked by a global pandemic, local broadcasters and newspapers do not have the option of going off the air or failing to publish the stories their neighbors so desperately need. Instead, local newsrooms spring into action, working around the clock to ensure that their viewers, listeners, and readers are informed, connected, and safe. Moreover, local media outlets shine a light on local government, health care, education, and the environment, constituting one of the bulwarks of our democracy. In the absence of local newsrooms, there is less accountability in communities and a less informed electorate.

In the case of local broadcasters, these critical services are provided for free, over the air, to their communities. But reporting high-quality, truly local news is anything but free. Local journalism requires significant investment: For a typical local broadcast station, news costs alone can account for more than a third of total expenditures. To defray the cost of operating local newsrooms, broadcasters and newspapers rely heavily on advertising revenue. In a rapidly evolving media environment where advertising dollars are devoured by massive online technology platforms, this critical advertising market has been disappearing for local media outlets. After businesses around the country shuttered with the onset of the COVID-19 crisis last year, the precarious reliance on increasingly meager advertising revenues became even more stark, and newsrooms were forced to downsize or even shut down completely.

The Local Journalism Sustainability Act (S. 2434), which was recently introduced by Senators Maria Cantwell (WA), Ron Wyden (OR), and Mark Kelly (AZ), would provide local newsrooms a lifeline that would enable them to sustain, and in some cases, significantly improve the critical public service these local media outlets provide their communities. This legislation proposes a series of tax incentives that would provide much-needed relief for local newsrooms, including a targeted tax credit for the hiring and retention of journalists. Another important provision would help local small businesses and local media alike, providing a tax credit for these businesses to advertise with their local broadcasters and newspapers.

Local broadcasters in all 50 states remain committed to providing critical – and free – service to their local communities. We therefore urge Congress to act swiftly and pass S. 2434 this year to ensure that local radio and television broadcasters and local newspapers can continue to serve their vital roles in informing Americans and keeping them safe.

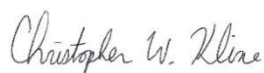
Respectfully,



Alabama Broadcasters Association
Sharon Tinsley



Alaska Broadcasters Association
Cathy Hiebert



Arizona Broadcasters Association
Christopher Kline



Arkansas Broadcasters Association
Luke Story



California Broadcasters Association
Joe Berry



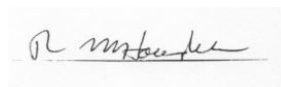
Colorado Broadcasters Association
Justin Sasso



Connecticut Broadcasters Association
Michael Patrick Ryan



Florida Association of Broadcasters
C. Patrick Roberts



Georgia Association of Broadcasters
Bob Houghton

Jamie Hartnett



Hawaii Association of Broadcasters
Jamie Hartnett

Connie M. Searles



Idaho State Broadcasters Association
Connie Searles

Dennis Lyle



Illinois Broadcasters Association
Dennis Lyle

Dave Arland



Indiana Broadcasters Association
Dave Arland

Lisa Reynolds



Iowa Broadcasters Association
Lisa Reynolds

Allison Mazzei



Kansas Association of Broadcasters
Allison Mazzei

Chris Winkle



Kentucky Broadcasters Association
Chris Winkle

Polly Prince Johnson



Louisiana Association of Broadcasters
Polly Prince Johnson

Suzanne Goucher



Maine Association of Broadcasters
Suzanne Goucher

Lisa Reynolds



Maryland/D.C./Delaware (MDCD) Broadcasters Association
Lisa Reynolds

Jordan Walton



Massachusetts Broadcasters Association
Jordan Walton

Karole L. White



Michigan Association of Broadcasters
Karole L. White

Wendy S. Paulson



Minnesota Broadcasters Association
Wendy Paulson

Amanda S. Fontaine



Mississippi Association of Broadcasters
Amanda Fontaine

Mark D. Gordon



Missouri Broadcasters Association
Mark Gordon

Dewey Bruce



Montana Broadcasters Association
Dewey Bruce

Jim Timm



Nebraska Broadcasters Association
Jim Timm

Mitch Fox



Nevada Broadcasters Association
Mitch Fox

Tracy Caruso



New Hampshire Association of Broadcasters
Tracy Caruso

Paul Rotella



New Jersey Broadcasters Association
Paul Rotella

Paula Maes



New Mexico Broadcasters Association
Paula Maes

David Donovan



New York State Broadcasters Association
David Donovan

Lisa Reynolds



North Carolina Association of Broadcasters
Lisa Reynolds

Beth A. Helfrich



North Dakota Broadcasters Association
Beth Helfrich



Ohio Association of Broadcasters
Christine Merritt



Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters
Vance Harrison



Oregon Association of Broadcasters
Bob Singer



Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters
Joe Conti



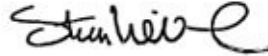
Radio Broadcasters Association of Puerto Rico
Felix Bonnet



Rhode Island Broadcasters Association
Lori Needham



South Carolina Broadcasters Association
Margaret Wallace



South Dakota Broadcasters Association
Steve Willard



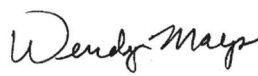
Tennessee Association of Broadcasters
Chris Baker



Texas Association of Broadcasters
Oscar Rodriguez



Utah Broadcasters Association
Michele Zabriskie



Vermont Association of Broadcasters
Wendy Mays

Doug F. Easter



Live. Local. Keeping You Connected.

Virginia Association of Broadcasters

Doug Easter

Keith Shipman



Washington State Association of Broadcasters

Washington State Association of Broadcasters

Keith Shipman

Michele C. Crist



West Virginia Broadcasters Association

Michele Crist

Michelle Vetterkind



Wisconsin Broadcasters Association

Michelle Vetterkind

Laura Grott



Wyoming Association of Broadcasters

Wyoming Association of Broadcasters

Laura Grott