

September 9, 2026

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Assemblymember Christopher M. Ward's Community NEWS Act (AB 2222)

Dear Governor Newsom:

We write to respectfully recommend enacting Assembly Bill 2222, also known as the Community Newsroom Employment and Workforce Sustainability Act (the Community NEWS Act). The bill was introduced by Assemblymember Christopher M. Ward, jointly authored by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, and cosponsored by Senator Jerry McNerny and Assemblymembers Josh Lowenthal, Tina McKinnor and Sharon Quirk-Silva.

This bill will make California the national leader in reviving community news, a crucial element in the drive to strengthen democracy.

Supermajorities in both chambers voted to send you this critical measure to help rebuild California's local news sector, which has garnered support from a diverse coalition spanning local, state and national organizations.

AB 2222's proposed local journalist employment credits would do more than support newsrooms in a nonpartisan and First Amendment-friendly way. They would strengthen local reporting capacity, safeguard the essential coverage communities rely on to stay informed and civically engaged, and help rebuild the state's information infrastructure.

Since 2002, the United States has [lost more than 80 percent of its local journalists](#), dropping from about 40 journalists per 100,000 residents to 7.8. Every week, [more than two newspapers shut down](#), leaving communities with diminished access to reliable information. Research shows that when local news disappears, government corruption, misinformation and polarization rise, while voter turnout, knowledge of public officials and civic engagement decline.

The erosion of local news also carries direct economic consequences. A 2026 report found that the shortage of local news is costing local governments [roughly \\$1.1 billion a year](#) in higher municipal borrowing costs. Without journalists monitoring local officials, lenders

respond by charging higher interest rates due to increased risk of wasteful spending and corruption.

California is not immune to these harms. It ranks among the 10 worst states for the number of journalists per 100,000 residents, with 37 counties — home to 30.5 million people — at or below the national average for local reporting capacity. Since 2005, the state has lost over 40 percent of its newspapers. Alpine and Sutter counties are considered news deserts, with eight additional counties labeled “higher risk” for becoming one.

It is not too late to reverse this decline. AB 2222 would provide much-needed support for community news providers based on the number of journalists they employ, with enhanced benefits for the smallest newsrooms and outlets creating new journalist jobs. The bill is designed to uplift the state’s entire local news ecosystem, ensuring that local print, digital, and broadcast outlets alike, whether they are for-profit, nonprofit or sole proprietorship, can benefit. It also includes objective safeguard to prevent abuse by partisan “pink slime” news operations while protecting editorial independence.

The Community News Act is fully paid for and strengthens California’s budget. It is financed by a measure that would end corporate tax breaks for executive compensation above \$1 million. Federal law does not allow this type of corporate tax break, and California’s legislature has chosen to align state tax policy and direct a portion of the resulting revenue to support community news jobs.

The journalist employment credit model has already been enacted in [New York](#), [Illinois](#) and [New Mexico](#), with early implementation in Illinois showing [meaningful promise](#).

For these reasons, the Community NEWS Act has united a historically broad coalition of labor unions, state press associations, journalism support organizations, independent and nonprofit publishers, identity-based media groups, university journalism leaders, and national industry advocates.

We underline our support and respectfully urge passage of AB 2222.

Signed,

National

Rebuild Local News
SAG-AFTRA
National Newspaper Association
National Association of Broadcasters
Communication Workers of America
National Newspaper Publishers Association | Black Press of America
National Assoc. of Hispanic Publications
Public Media Company
Institute for Nonprofit News
Local Independent Online News Publishers
News/Media Alliance
The NewsGuild-CWA
Society of Professional Journalists
Report for America
American Journalism Project
America's Newspapers
Bonneville International (TV, Radio)
PEN America
National Trust for Local News
Solutions Journalism Network
Association of Alternative Newsmedia

South Carolina Press Association
Nevada Press Association
Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association
Spanish Broadcasting System, inc.
Kentucky Press Assoc.
Wisconsin NewsMedia Association
Kansas Press Association
Washington Newspaper Publishers Association
Nebraska Press Assoc.
Utah Press Association
Montana Newspaper Association
Hoosier State Press Association
Iowa Newspaper Assoc.
Public Knowledge
Freedom of the Press Foundation
Military Veterans in Journalism
Trusting News
MindSite News
The Media and Democracy Project
Media Action Center*
Public Media Venture Group*
Times Media Group*

California

California Black Media
Latino Media Collaborative
American Community Media
California Independent News Alliance
California News Publishers Association
California Broadcasters Association
Media Guild of the West of The NewsGuild-CWA
CalMatters
La Opinion
San Francisco Chronicle
Pacific Media Workers Guild of The NewsGuild-CWA
Journalism Chairs of the Cal State University System
Black Voice News (Riverside)
KQED
The Sacramento Observer
LAist
Lookout Santa Cruz
CCNMA Latino Journalists of California
Cityside (Berkeleyside, Richmondside, Oaklandside)

**New supporters who signed after the letter was delivered to Gov. Gavin Newsom on Sept. 9, 2026.*

California Cont'd

Embarcadero Media
Foundation

Coastside News Group
(Half Moon Bay Review and
Pacifica Tribune)

The LA Local

NABET-CWA Local 51

KVCR Public Media

KPBS

PBS KVIE / Abridged

SPJ, Greater LA Pro Chapter

Robert C. Maynard
Institute for Journalism
Education

The Center for Investigative
Reporting (San Francisco)*

El Popular Bakersfield

Northern California Public
Media

The Riverside Record

BenitoLink

Los Angeles Public Press

Coastal View News
(Carpenteria)

Santa Clara Weekly

EdSource

Los Angeles Press Club

Santa Barbara Independent

La Nueva Voz (Pomona)

Coachella Valley
Independent

Ventura County Sun

Point Reyes Light

Lake County News

Ojai Valley News

Needles Desert-Star

Mariposa Gazette

Alameda Post

Boyle Heights Beat

Long Beach Post

Slavic Sacramento

India Currents (Silicon
Valley)

J. The Jewish News of
Northern California

Nowruz Media (Bay Area)

Tahoe Tribune

Sierra Sun (North Lake
Tahoe)

Oakland Voices

Silicon Valley Voice

Capital & Main

Palo Verde Valley Times

Punjabi Radio (San Jose)

Imperial Valley Press (El
Centro)

Napa Valley Register

Healdsburg Tribune

KRML Radio (Carmel)

Pacific Sun (Marin)

Institute for Media and
Public Trust (Fresno)

LA Reporting Collective

KBIF 900

Fullerton Observer

Good Times Weekly (Santa
Cruz)

Tri-City Voice (Fremont,
Newark and Union City)

White Ash Broadcasting,
Inc (Valley Public Radio)

Bay Area Reporter

The Ark (Belvedere)

Weeklys Media Group

Media Alliance

The Mendocino Voice

Golden State

Asian American Journalists
Assoc. of LA

Mineral King Publishing

Impulso Newspaper (LA)

Marquee Broadcasting
West - Redwood News

UsK-News

Kiosko News (LA)

Nevada City Community
Broadcasters Group

San Jose Spotlight

Broke-Ass Stuart (Bay Area)

Central Valley Journalism
Collaborative

Shafter-Wasco Publishing

Shasta Scout

El Nuevo Sol (Northridge)

San Francisco Public Press

Bay City News

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California Cont'd

Santa Barbara News-Press

Pasadena Outlook*

Glendale News Press*

Burbank Leader*

KWMR (Point Reyes)*

Mission Local (San
Francisco)*

News for Chinese (San
Jose)*

US News Express (Los
Angeles County)*

HHTV*

Tehran Magazine*

Radio Korea*

Little Saigon TV*

Nguoi Viet Daily News*

Indian Voices/Indigenous
Network*

ChicoSol*

Hispanic LA*

Pacifika By Design*

KXO AM, KXO-FM and
KXORADIO.COM*

Russian California / RusCali
(RusCali.com)*

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