

# America's Newspapers

NEWSPAPERS.ORG

## Advocacy Update: Public Notices at Risk



*Newspapers continue to face mounting pressure from legislators on the publishing of public notices. Florida, Texas, Indiana and others are currently debating some of the most aggressive bills yet — all designed to remove or limit the need to publish public notices in newspapers.*

This is an urgent matter that will require the efforts of all newspapers to make sure public notices are protected. America's Newspapers, along with state press associations, is fully engaged on this matter at every level. To assist our members, we've developed a variety of resources and ask each newspaper to take action on this important issue.

- Engage with your state government representatives and let them know the importance of keeping public notices in newspapers.
- Educate your readers on why keeping public notices in newspapers protects their right to know. Run the public notices campaign and editorials (see below) to create awareness.
- Follow what's happening across the country at [newspapers.org/public-notices](https://www.newspapers.org/public-notices) and share information on what's happening in your state.

If you have specific questions about public notices and what you can do to help protect them, don't hesitate to contact me directly at [dridings@newspapers.org](mailto:dridings@newspapers.org).

## Download and reprint these public notice ads



### Ad campaign focuses on need to protect public notices in newspapers and your right to know

You have the right to know what's happening in your community.

[A new marketing campaign being rolled out by America's Newspapers](#) highlights the need to protect public notices in newspapers and readers' right to know.

Newspapers can download this series of print and social media ads at no cost. The print ads include space for the name or logo of the newspaper publishing them.

The ads, produced in partnership with [Sandpaper Marketing](#), call on readers to let their state legislators know that they value being able to access notices in the newspaper and that they are worth the investment.

If you have any difficulty accessing the files, email [Greg Watson](mailto:Greg.Watson@newspapers.org) at America's Newspapers.

[Yes, I want to access the print and digital ads from America's Newspapers!](#)

### [Yes, I want to access the print and digital ads from America's Newspapers!](#)

*"Public notices — information local governments are obligated to provide citizens — are required to be published in local newspapers to provide a public record that's accessible to everyone," the ads read.*

*"Public notices keep you informed about your government. But, in some states legislators are trying to keep public notices from appearing in local newspapers. This severely impacts government transparency and, in turn, limits*

the public's right to hold them accountable for their actions."



## Who cares about public notices? You should.

Let your state legislators know that you value being able to access notices in your newspaper and that they are worth the investment. There is a cost to keeping citizens informed, but the costs of not doing so are much higher!

[REPRINT OUR EDITORIAL AND CARTOON](#)

## All eyes are on Florida



### Newspaper publishers from across the country are watching the moves taking place in the Florida legislature

The Public Notice Resource Center reports that one of the primary concerns to be addressed during a Florida hearing scheduled for Thursday, April 8, concerns the type of free newspapers that may qualify to carry notices.

[Read more from the Public Notice Resource Center](#)

### Why this legislation matters

**Dean Ridings, CEO of America's Newspapers, says:** "The need for transparency in government is clear, and public notice in newspapers is still the most effective and proactive mechanism to inform a community about the actions of their government. It may be cheaper for cities to post notices to their own website, but the small cost to post notices in newspapers is nothing compared to the value of the notices being seen by the community. The actions of some in the Florida legislature to eliminate notices in newspapers are misguided at best, and the punitive action to punish newspapers by

**Paul Tash, CEO and chairman of the Tampa Bay Times, says:** "Independent journalism is already under crushing pressure, and these bills would further weaken the ability of citizens to keep track of what their government is up to. Agencies could bury their agendas and ambitions on their own websites or obscure shoppers with tiny distribution. Lawmakers may be aiming at publishers, but the ultimate victims will be their own constituents."

**Gerard Mulligan, publisher of the Citrus County Chronicle, says:** "We are disappointed that our legislators continue to view this in political terms. Public notice is not a subsidy of dying newspapers. It is the most cost-effective way for government to fulfill its responsibility to properly notify taxpayers about pending actions and decisions. Florida newspapers in print and digital reach 8 million people every day. We are a communication bargain."

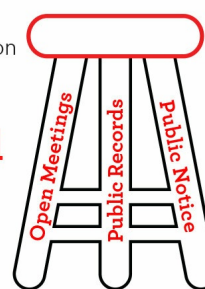
"At the same time, publishers must work with legislators — particularly the Republican leadership — to make sure they understand our opinion pages and digital platforms are open to all opinions in our communities. The political narrative has become that we suppress conservative opinion and that a great way to hurt the newspaper business is by ending the public notice function."

"Publishers need to actively demonstrate that everyone gets access to our newspapers. The politicians need to remember that public notice is a requirement for good government and not a hammer to use to get a political point across."

removing notices when legislators don't agree with their editorial positions harms far more than just the newspapers — it harms the public's right to be informed."

Along with open meeting and freedom of information laws, public notice is an essential element of the

## three-legged stool of government transparency



Download a two-page PDF from the Public Notice Resource Center: "[Why Public Notice Should Remain in Newspapers](#)"

### Get Involved. Be Heard. Invest In Your Future.

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