****Editor's Note: This editorial is available to all newspapers to reprint.

**Local News is Good for Business**

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It’s no secret that recent years have been tough on small businesses and on newspapers. A bipartisan bill, the Community News & Small Business Support Act, that has been introduced in Congress would offer relief to both newspapers and local businesses. For too many newspapers, help can’t come soon enough. Economic challenges have resulted in too many communities seeing their local newspapers being forced to lay off staff, cut back on publication days or – worse yet – close. On average, two newspapers are closing each week. That hurts local businesses and residents in the long (and short) run. However, despite the challenges, what remains true is that local newspapers make a difference in their communities.

But, don’t just take my word for it. Let’s look at the numbers and why America’s Newspapers has been pushing for the Community News & Small Business Support Act to be introduced.

A recent national study of 5,000 Americans over the age of 18 was conducted by the independent research firm Coda Ventures for America’s Newspapers, and provides compelling evidence of the importance, relevance and vitality of today’s newspapers in the American media landscape.

Readers told us that their local newspaper makes a difference. The study shows that 79 percent of Americans read/use local news “to stay informed” about their cities, counties and communities. They also said they rely on their local paper to feel connected to their community, to decide where they stand on local issues, to find places and things to do, to talk with people about things happening in the community, because they find it enjoyable/entertaining and to be a better citizen.

And, contrary to popular belief, readers across all age groups turn to local newspapers and their digital products to stay informed about their communities.

Readers also told us they need more local news from their community paper. As one survey respondent in California said, “Our paper keeps getting smaller. I would like to see more news items, what’s happening in town, what’s new in politics, etc. And they need to be quicker to respond to breaking news.”

All of that takes a committed, local staff – something the legislation introduced by Congresswoman Claudia Tenney (NY-24) and Congresswoman Suzan DelBene (WA-1) will help to make happen.

So, what would this legislation mean to your local community?

Local businesses with fewer than 50 employees would receive a five-year non-refundable tax credit of up to $5,000 in the first year and up to $2,500 in the subsequent four years based on their spending level with local newspapers and local media. Our study showed that six out of 10 American adults use newspaper advertising to help them decide what brands, products and local services to buy. Newspaper readers also are almost twice as likely to purchase products from a number of important advertising categories than non-newspaper readers, including: automobiles, trucks and SUVs; home furnishings; home improvement products and services; and home services like pest control, plumbing, heating, etc.

With this legislation, we expect to see more businesses being able to afford to advertise to consumers, which – in turn – helps communities thrive.

For local newspapers, a five-year refundable tax credit would help them hire more journalists to bring you more news! It’s a win-win for local communities. Newspapers would receive a tax credit to be used for the compensation of journalists. The credit would cover 50% of journalists’ compensation in the first year and 30% of compensation (up to $50,000) in the subsequent four years. This tax credit would only be available to local community papers with fewer than 750 employees and, if they don’t invest in their newsroom, they don’t get the credit.

And these tax credits are only available to local newspapers. National newspaper outlets are not eligible.

The importance of local newspapers and local business is the reason Reps. Tenney and DelBene introduced the legislation. We are most grateful for their support.

We need your support, as well, to encourage legislators to enact this legislation. Please contact the offices of your senators and representatives in the U.S. Congress and encourage them to add their support to this legislation. These tax credits aren’t permanent; they will sunset in five years. But, these critical five years will allow the newspaper industry the time needed to address the challenges that it is facing from Big Tech, which often uses newspapers’ content without compensation, as well as other technological and market challenges. Visit [www.usa.gov/elected-officials](http://www.usa.gov/elected-officials) for the contact information for your legislators.

More local reporting means more access for hometown news that citizens like you rely on. And stronger newspapers mean stronger advertising vehicles for local businesses.

*On behalf of its approximately 1,700 newspaper and Solutions Partner companies, America’s Newspapers is committed to explaining, defending and advancing the vital role of newspapers in democracy and civil life. We put an emphasis on educating the public on all the ways newspapers contribute to building a community identity and the success of local businesses. Learn more:* [*www.newspapers.org*](http://www.newspapers.org)

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