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

**Why Congress needs to support your local news sources in this crisis**

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During this coronavirus pandemic, access to accurate and trustworthy information in your community is as critical to life under quarantine and as sought after as hand sanitizer and face masks.

Your local newspaper provides the news and information unique to your community. Where are the testing sites and who’s eligible, which businesses are open, what is the local online unemployment benefit application process, and much more.  But your access to local news and information is gravely threatened by the economic carnage COVID-19 has wrought.

While local newspapers continue to field reporters and bring news and advice from public health authorities in print and online — at considerable cost — their revenues have all but disappeared as the businesses that were their most important advertisers were shuttered. That’s why America’s Newspapers and other organizations representing local news providers are asking Congress to take urgent action to ensure you don’t lose your vital sources of timely and trustworthy information.

First, we’re asking that Congress expand and clarify the Payroll Protection Program to ensure it covers all local newspapers and news broadcasters. While some of these outlets may be owned by large organizations, they must survive on their own. It’s only fair that they should be included in any expansion of the program.  These loans will keep the newspaper employees — your neighbors — on their payrolls and help get the news to you in print as well as online.  We appreciate the bipartisan letter of April 19th from U.S. Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA), John Kennedy (R-LA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and John Boozman (R-AR) that requested waiving the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) affiliation rule to allow local media outlets to access funding, pointing to the critical role these outlets play in keeping communities healthy and informed.

Second, we are asking that the Trump Administration direct current federal government advertising funds to local news and media outlets. These public service and informative ads could be similar to the ones running right now about the U.S. Census. They could carry critical government information about data from the CDC, access to small business loans, medical resources for families and other important topics. We’re asking for a commitment that would be spent in an equitable manner across all local news providers.

We also believe that there should be an immediate relief package that is based on total newsroom employees. Some local news organizations won’t survive without some type of immediate grant or infusion that is tied to the organization’s employees who directly work in the newsroom.

This is not a demand for an industry bailout by local news providers. Instead, these measures recognize that local news publishers are on the information front line of the coronavirus pandemic, providing a public service vital to keeping our communities safe, secure and sustained during this unprecedented public health crisis.

Please contact the offices of your senators and representatives in the U.S. Congress and tell them you support expanding the Payroll Protection Program to include your local news source and that the federal government should use your local newspapers or news broadcaster to convey important information through public service ads. And finally, let them know that a grant based on newsroom employees is critical at this time. Visit [www.usa.gov/elected-officials](http://www.usa.gov/elected-officials) for their contact information.

Take this easy action to ensure that your access to local information doesn’t become another victim to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you and may you and your family remain safe and informed during this difficult time.

*On behalf of its approximately 1,500 newspaper and associate member 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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