**A close up of a sign

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**THIS COLUMN IS AVAILABLE TO ALL NEWSPAPERS FOR REPRINT**

**A person in a suit smiling

Description automatically generatedTrusted and reliable, local newspapers matter to their communities  
  
By Dean Ridings, CEO, America’s Newspapers**

A recent Gallup study showed that America’s confidence in the national mass media has reached a near record low. While that’s disturbing, it’s not unexpected. The digital age has brought a barrage of national news sources that are focused on sound bites, opinions, partisan views and a race to push out breaking news, even if it hasn’t been properly fact-checked or vetted. The problem has been exacerbated by social media channels that allow disinformation to be distributed virtually unchecked.

**Americans trust local newspapers**

However, Americans feel differently when it comes to their local newspaper. According to a 2023 national survey of 5,000 adults, local newspapers are the most relied on and trusted media source of original reporting: more than television and radio, and significantly more than social media. Trust in local newspapers extends across age groups and demographics, as adults of all segments recognize the value of reliable local reporting that newspapers deliver.

And, beyond just trusting the reporting local newspapers provide, Americans recognize how important it is to have a healthy local newspaper in their community. In fact, 74% of all Americans stated that having a newspaper in their community is important for providing them with much needed local news and information. It’s hard to get Americans to agree on anything, but they agree that local newspapers are important.

**Local newspapers shine a light on important issues**

American’s trust in their local newspaper is not surprising. A local newspaper’s commitment to reporting the news is different than the national mass media. Local newspapers are just that, local, and are staffed with dedicated professional journalists who live and work in the communities they cover. The issues that are important to the community are also important to local reporters, and that creates a deep accountability to delivering trusted, unbiased news.

Readers and non-readers alike rely on their local newspaper to shine a spotlight on the issues that matter most to them. From holding local institutions accountable, to reporting on local schools, sports or entertainment for the weekend, local journalists often uncover stories that might otherwise go unnoticed. That local connection instills confidence that the information being delivered is coming from a source that is invested in the health of the community and committed to high standards of journalistic integrity.

**Local newspapers are a trusted advertising source**

The trust in local newspapers goes beyond just traditional news. It applies to local advertising, as well. The same national study of 5,000 adults found that 60% of Americans use newspaper advertising to help them decide what brands, products and local services to buy. That’s about the same as local television and much higher than radio, direct mail and social media ads.

**Supporting newspapers makes a difference**

Despite the high levels of trust in local newspapers, the business model continues to face challenges. The way people consume news has changed, but Big Tech's continued use of local newspapers’ content without paying for it puts even more strain on the newspaper business model.

There are easy ways for you to support your local newspaper – and ensure that quality local journalism remains in your community. In addition to subscribing or advertising, ask your congressional representatives to support the Community News and Small Business Support Act (HR 4756) that has recently been introduced in Congress. This bipartisan bill provides much-needed support to local newspapers that invest in their journalists. For every local journalist who is employed to work on local news, the newspaper will receive a tax credit. The act is a cost-effective way for local newspapers to keep professional journalists covering their communities. It’s a win for everyone. Visit [www.supportcommunitynews.com](http://www.supportcommunitynews.com) for more info, and thanks for reading this newspaper!

**About America’s Newspapers:**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: [newspapers.org](https://newspapers.org)

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