



Honorable Thomas Umberg
Honorable Scott Wilk
Honorable Benjamin Allen
Honorable Angelique Ashby
Honorable Anna Caballero
Honorable Maria Elena Durazo
Honorable John Laird
Honorable Roger Niello
Honorable Richard D. Roth
Honorable Henry Stern
Honorable Aisha Wahab

June 18, 2024

Re: AB 886 (Wicks) California Journalism Preservation Act – Support

Dear Chair Umberg and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

We represent thousands of journalists and communications workers who provide the essential local news and information millions of Californians rely upon. Members of our unions are journalists, technicians and freelancers at commercial and nonprofit news outlets large and small, across print, broadcast and digital media including Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, KQED, CalMatters, Telemundo (KVEA), LAist (KPCC), Sacramento Bee, KABC, Orange County Register, KCRW, Univision (KMEX and KDTV), Fresno Bee, Modesto Bee, KPBS, CapRadio, KGO, Los Angeles Daily News, KMBC, East Bay Times, KTTV, Berkeleyside, The Oaklandside, KOVR, KMAX-TV, Reveal from the Center for Investigative Reporting, KSBY, Press-Enterprise, Mercury News, Embarcadero Media, Desert Sun, Press Democrat, Long Beach Post and more.

We write in support of Assembly Bill 886, the California Journalism Preservation Act, which will protect journalism jobs by leveling the playing field between news outlets and massive tech platforms, especially as Big Tech explores using artificial intelligence technology to extract additional value from journalists' work without compensation.

Like all workers, journalists' labor produces value. We demand our fair share of it through collective bargaining with our employers, as protected by the National Labor Relations Act. But if that value gets unfairly captured by third-party tech platforms instead of the news outlets that employ us, we can't bargain for pay that reflects our actual economic productivity.

Meanwhile, journalism jobs keep disappearing in print, broadcast and digital news outlets alike. Over the past year, both for-profit and nonprofit California news outlets including the Los Angeles Times, LAist 89.3 FM (formerly KPCC), KCRW, KQED, CapRadio and Long Beach Post have announced major staff reductions. Digital news startup dot.LA laid off its entire editorial team, while independent digital news site L.A. Taco has had to furlough staff and hold an emergency fundraising drive to stay alive.

The CJPA would require massive tech platforms that control the digital advertising market to pay a usage fee to qualifying news outlets in exchange for profiting from our journalism, in an amount to be determined through negotiation or third-party arbitration. New amendments will set distribution to newsrooms based on how many news journalists they employ who primarily cover California, ensuring that funds go to local news outlets that actually invest in journalism.

While versions of this type of platform-publisher legislation have been introduced around the world, the CJPA goes the farthest in ensuring funds support journalists and our work serving communities across California.

Publishers with more than five employees must spend at least 70% of fees generated by CJPA on payroll for journalists and essential support staff. Outlets that wish to receive these funds must disclose to their employees how they plan to comply with the statute's payroll requirements and publish an annual transparency report disclosing how the funds were actually spent.

These first-in-class labor protections are especially supported by the undersigned unions that represent journalists at the California newsrooms owned by hedge funds and private equity that provide the news for many Californians. We are strong believers in transparency and accountability, and this bill will give journalists, their unions, policymakers and the public the tools we need to ensure that these funds go to newsrooms before boardrooms as intended.

For these reasons, we respectfully encourage you to vote yes on the California Journalism Preservation Act.

California Labor Federation - Sara Flocks, *Legislative and Strategic Campaigns Director*

Communications Workers of America, District 9 - Frank Arce, *Vice President*

Media Guild of the West, The NewsGuild-CWA Local 39213 - Matt Pearce, *President*

NABET-CWA - Charlie Braico, *President*

NABET-CWA Local 51 - Carrie Biggs-Adams, *President*

NABET-CWA Local 53 - Joe Ayala, *President*

NABET-CWA Region 5 - Kevin Gallo, *Vice President*

National Writers Union - Larry Goldbetter, *President*

Pacific Media Workers Guild, The NewsGuild-CWA Local 39521 - Annie Sciacca, *President*

SAG-AFTRA - Fran Drescher, *President*

The NewsGuild-CWA - Jon Schleuss, *President*