



THE NEWSGUILD

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February 11, 2025

Chair Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbear
Vice Chair Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Ways and Means Committee
Maryland General Assembly
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chair Delegate Atterbear and Vice Chair Delegate Wilkins,

I'm Jon Schleuss, president of The NewsGuild-CWA. We are the largest union of journalists in North America and represent thousands of journalists and media workers throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. I write in support of HB 891, which would provide a tax credit to Maryland news organizations for the hiring and retention of newsroom employees.

Since 2005 the United States has lost more than 3,300 printed newspapers, according to the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. At the same time we've lost more than 45,000 newsroom jobs. That's a 60% loss of editors, reporters and other journalists in just two decades.

News deserts, or areas with little to no local news outlets, continue to expand. There are 206 U.S. counties with no local news outlets. And on a per capita basis, Maryland ranks near the bottom of news outlet density. Maryland ranks 46th among states and Washington, D.C., with just 1.48 news outlets per 100,000 residents.

Every layoff, buyout and closure destroys another community across our country. Each journalist lost means another important government meeting goes uncovered. It means another high school football team isn't covered. Each journalist lost chips away at our ability to know what our government is doing and to see ourselves—and our communities—reflected in our lives.

We desperately need HB 891 to support journalists as a critical profession that is fundamental to our communities and our democracy.

Diane Mastrull
Chairperson

Jon Schleuss
President

Marian Needham
Executive Vice President

CWA|SCA Canada President: Carmel Smyth
Vice Presidents: Kathy McCabe, Dan Gabor, Sandra Tan, Michael Cabanatuan, Bill Baker, Andrew Carillo

Last year New York became the first state in our nation's history to pass a journalism jobs tax credit. Their Local Journalism Sustainability Act provided \$30 million in tax credits each year for three years, covering half of a journalist's salary up to \$50,000.

Then Illinois followed suit and passed its own employment tax credits a few months after New York.

Maryland should be next. Let's stem the loss of local news jobs. Let's honor the First Amendment and support a free press.

I urge the committee to support HB 891.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Schleuss". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Jon Schleuss
President
The NewsGuild-CWA