



Honorable Thomas J. Umberg
Honorable Scott Wilk
Honorable Benjamin Allen
Honorable Angelique V. Ashby
Honorable Anna M. Caballero
Honorable Maria Elena Durazo
Honorable John Laird
Honorable David Min
Honorable Roger W. Niello
Honorable Henry I Stern
Honorable Scott D. Wiener

July 3, 2023

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 across California. Members of our unions are staff and freelance journalists who work for commercial and nonprofit news outlets, large and small, that millions of Californians rely upon for essential news: Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Orange County Register, Sacramento Bee, Los Angeles Daily News, East Bay Times, Berkeleyside, The Oaklandside, Reveal from the Center for Investigative Reporting, Press-Enterprise, Mercury News, Desert Sun, Fresno Bee and more.

We write in support of the California Journalism Preservation Act, which will protect journalism jobs by leveling the playing field between news outlets and massive tech platforms.

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.¹ But if that value gets unfairly captured by third-party tech platforms instead of the news outlets that

¹29 U.S.C. §§ 151-169

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. In June 2023 in Los Angeles alone, the Los Angeles Times² and LAist 89.3 FM³ (formerly KPCC) announced layoffs of more than 10% of their respective staff, while digital news startup dot.LA laid off its entire editorial team.⁴

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.

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

At least 70% of fees generated by CJPA must be spent 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, which would allow policymakers and the public to assess this legislation's real-world impact and make adjustments as necessary.

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, policymakers and the public the tools we need to ensure that newsroom owners of all types adhere to the bill's intent to put newsrooms before boardrooms.

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

California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO
Communications Workers of America, District 9
Media Guild of the West, The NewsGuild-CWA Local 39213
National Writers Union
Pacific Media Workers Guild, The NewsGuild-CWA Local 39521

²<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/business/story/2023-06-07/los-angeles-times-newsroom-layoffs-merida-soon-shiong>

³<https://laist.com/news/scpr-to-cut-more-than-10-of-staff-positions-ceo-cites-budget-shortfall>

⁴<https://www.thewrap.com/dot-la-sacks-entire-editorial-staff-ceo-sam-adams/>