



Maryland | Delaware | DC Press Association

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To: Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Rebecca Snyder, Executive Director, MDDC Press Association

Date: February 28, 2020

Re: **SB 180 - OPPOSE**

The Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Press Association represents a diverse membership of news media organizations, from large metro dailies like the Washington Post and the Baltimore Sun, to hometown newspapers such as The Annapolis Capital and the Maryland Gazette to publications such as The Daily Record, the Baltimore Times, and online-only publications such as MarylandReporter.com and Baltimore Brew.

This bill allows the local licensing board to substitute posting on its website for publishing the notice in the local newspaper, and requires the applicant to post physical notice on the property. Proper public notice follows four best practices: (1) it is independent from the entity that requires publication; (2) is in the context of other general news important to readers; (3) is verifiable; and (4) reaches the widest cross section of the population. I've attached a primer on public notice for your review.

This proposal would, essentially, replace the public notice with a posting on the County liquor board website. It is confusing, because there is no clear place for individuals to look for notices. Sometimes it may be in the newspaper and news website, other times it may be on the liquor board website. It puts another burden on interested citizens to check another location for information about their community. This proposal does not hit any of the best practices for public notice. It is not independent, it stands alone on a specialized website, and it is not verifiable that the notice was published. Finally, the liquor board website traffic is dwarfed by the audience reach of the Capital Gazette's print and online audience.

As drafted, this bill is bad public policy and gives short shrift to the responsibility of government to inform its citizens about actions in the community. We believe more notice is better notice. We suggest that the bill be amended to read in Page 2, lines 14-16 "(a) (1) THE BOARD MUST FULFILL THE NOTICE REQUIREMENT UNDER ss 4-208 OF THIS ARTICLE BY POSTING ONLINE IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE ON THEIR WEBSITE A COMPLETED APPLICATION AT LEAST 10 DAYS BEFORE THE APPLICATION HEARING."

Further, on Page 2, line 18, the OR should be changed to AND.

We ask for an unfavorable report unless the bill is amended.

FACTS

MDDC PRESS

MATTER

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central to a strong and open society.**

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