

SENATE BILL 64

L6
HB 74/25 – JUD

(PRE-FILED)

6lr1253
CF HB 10

By: **Senator West**

Requested: October 20, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Legal Advertisement or Legal Notice – Publication in Newspaper or Newspaper**
3 **in General Circulation – Digital Newspapers**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing certain requirements for the publication of certain
5 advertisements and notices in counties and municipalities in the State; requiring
6 certain digital publications to meet certain qualifications before publishing a certain
7 legal advertisement or legal notice; and generally relating to the publication of legal
8 advertisements and legal notices in counties and municipalities in the State.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
10 Article – General Provisions
11 Section 1–113
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
15 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article – General Provisions**

17 1–113.

18 (a) Unless otherwise provided, in a law, resolution, or court order, judgment, or
19 decree that refers to publishing a legal advertisement or legal notice, words such as
20 “newspaper” or “newspaper in general circulation” mean a **PRINT OR DIGITAL** publication
21 that:

22 (1) [has at least four pages;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2)] habitually contains news items, reports of current events, editorial comments, advertising matter, and other miscellaneous information that is of public interest and is found generally in an ordinary newspaper;

[(3)] (2) has been published and distributed, by sale, from an established place of business at least once a week for 6 months or more before publication of the advertisement or notice;

[(4)] (3) has general circulation throughout the community where the publication is published; [and

(5)] (4) **FOR A PRINT PUBLICATION:**

(I) qualifies for Periodicals rates for mailing through the United States Postal Service; **AND**

(II) **HAS AT LEAST FOUR PAGES; AND**

(5) **SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION, FOR A DIGITAL PUBLICATION:**

(I) **EMPLOYS OR RETAINS ONE OR MORE PERSONS TO CREATE, EDIT, PRODUCE, AND DISTRIBUTE ORIGINAL CONTENT CONCERNING MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST THROUGH REPORTING ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS, OBSERVING CURRENT EVENTS, AND REVIEWING DOCUMENTS OR OTHER INFORMATION;**

(II) **EMPLOYS AT LEAST ONE INDIVIDUAL FULL TIME, WORKING AT LEAST 30 HOURS PER WEEK, WHO:**

1. **RESIDES WITHIN 50 MILES OF THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION WHERE THE LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE IS REQUIRED TO BE PUBLISHED; AND**

2. **GATHERS, PREPARES, COLLECTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, WRITES, EDITS, REPORTS, OR PUBLISHES ORIGINAL LOCAL OR STATE NEWS FOR DISTRIBUTION IN THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION;**

(III) **PUBLISHES AT LEAST ONE ARTICLE PER WEEK CONCERNING MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST FOR THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION DURING THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 12 MONTHS; AND**

(IV) **IF DESIGNATED AS A TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATION UNDER § 501(C)(3) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE:**

1 1. DECLARES IN ITS INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
2 FILINGS THAT ITS MISSION INCLUDES THE COVERAGE OF LOCAL OR STATE NEWS;
3 AND

4 2. HAS NOT RECEIVED MORE THAN 50% OF ITS GROSS
5 RECEIPTS DURING THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING YEAR FROM:

6 A. POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES OR OTHER ENTITIES
7 DESCRIBED IN § 527 OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE; OR

8 B. ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE DESIGNATED AS
9 TAX-EXEMPT UNDER § 501(C)(4), (5), OR (6) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE.

10 (B) SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION, A DIGITAL
11 PUBLICATION THAT PUBLISHES A LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE
12 SHALL:

13 (1) MAINTAIN AN ARCHIVE OF ALL PUBLISHED LEGAL
14 ADVERTISEMENTS AND LEGAL NOTICES THAT SHALL BE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC;
15 AND

16 (2) BE ACCESSIBLE IN THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
17 THAT IS REQUIRED TO PUBLISH THE LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE.

18 (C) FOR PURPOSES OF THE PUBLIC GENERAL LAWS OF THE STATE, IF A
19 LAW, RESOLUTION, COURT ORDER, JUDGMENT, OR DECREE REQUIRES A COUNTY OR
20 MUNICIPAL CORPORATION TO PUBLISH A LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT OR LEGAL
21 NOTICE IN A PRINT OR DIGITAL NEWSPAPER IN GENERAL CIRCULATION, THE TIME
22 PERIOD REQUIRED FOR PUBLICATION BEGINS ON THE DATE THE FIRST
23 ADVERTISEMENT OR NOTICE APPEARS IN PRINT OR DIGITAL FORMAT.

24 [(b)] (D) Subject to subsection (a) of this section and for purposes of the public
25 general laws of the State, in Prince George's County, "newspaper in general circulation"
26 includes a newspaper that:

27 (1) is designated by the County Council as a newspaper of record; or

28 (2) (i) qualifies under subsection (a) of this section with respect to
29 Prince George's County; and

30 (ii) is published by a small business as defined in § 14-201 of the
31 State Finance and Procurement Article.

1 [(c) Subject to subsection (a) of this section and for purposes of the public general
2 laws of the State, in Dorchester County, if a law, resolution, or court order, judgment, or
3 decree requires the county to publish a legal advertisement or legal notice:

4 (1) any required advertisement or notice shall be published and distributed
5 through print and digital format;

6 (2) the time period required for publication starts once the first
7 advertisement or notice appears in print or digital format; and

8 (3) if there is no print and digital publication that meets all of the
9 qualifications under subsection (a) of this section, the advertisement or notice may be
10 placed in any digital publication that can be accessed in Dorchester County and that
11 regularly contains local news and information for Dorchester County.]

12 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
13 October 1, 2026.