

SENATE BILL 459

P2

6lr1389
CF HB 43

By: Senator Rosapepe

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2026

Assigned to: Budget and Taxation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Procurement – Advertising – Local News Organizations**
3 **(Local Newspapers for Maryland Communities Act of 2026)**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring a unit of State government to ensure that at least a certain
5 amount of the unit's total dollar value of procurement contracts for print and digital
6 advertising is being made directly to local news organizations; and generally relating
7 to procurement contracts made to local news organizations.

8 BY adding to
9 Article – State Finance and Procurement
10 Section 14-419
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

15 **Article – State Finance and Procurement**

16 **14-419.**

17 **(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION, “LOCAL NEWS ORGANIZATION” MEANS AN**
18 **ENTITY THAT:**

19 **(I) ENGAGES PROFESSIONALS TO CREATE, EDIT, PRODUCE,**
20 **AND DISTRIBUTE ORIGINAL CONTENT CONCERNING MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**
21 **THROUGH REPORTING, CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS, OBSERVING CURRENT EVENTS,**
22 **OR ANALYZING INFORMATION;**

23 **(II) HAS AT LEAST ONE EMPLOYEE WHO:**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



- 1 1. IS EMPLOYED FULL TIME;
- 2 2. IS DEDICATED TO PROVIDING COVERAGE OF EVENTS
- 3 IN MARYLAND; AND
- 4 3. RESIDES IN MARYLAND OR WITHIN 50 MILES OF
- 5 MARYLAND;

6 (III) IN THE CASE OF A PRINT PUBLICATION, HAS PUBLISHED AT
7 LEAST ONE PRINT PUBLICATION PER MONTH OVER THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS AND:

- 8 1. HOLDS A VALID U.S. POSTAL SERVICE PERIODICAL
- 9 PERMIT; OR
- 10 2. HAS AT LEAST 25% OF ITS CONTENT DEDICATED TO
- 11 LOCAL NEWS;

12 (IV) IN THE CASE OF AN ENTITY THAT PUBLISHES CONTENT
13 ONLY IN DIGITAL FORM:

14 1. HAS PUBLISHED AT LEAST ONE PIECE ABOUT EVENTS
15 IN MARYLAND PER WEEK OVER THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS; AND

16 2. FOR WHICH AT LEAST 33% OF ITS AUDIENCE,
17 AVERAGED OVER A 12-MONTH PERIOD, IS LOCATED IN MARYLAND;

18 (V) HAS DISCLOSED, IN ITS PRINT PUBLICATION OR ON ITS
19 WEBSITE:

20 1. ITS BENEFICIAL OWNERS; OR

21 2. IN THE CASE OF A NONPROFIT ENTITY, ITS BOARD OF
22 DIRECTORS; AND

23 (VI) IN THE CASE OF AN ENTITY THAT MAINTAINS TAX STATUS
24 UNDER § 501(C)(3) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE, HAS DECLARED COVERAGE
25 OF LOCAL OR STATE NEWS AS ITS STATED MISSION IN A FILING WITH THE INTERNAL
26 REVENUE SERVICE.

27 (2) “LOCAL NEWS ORGANIZATION” DOES NOT INCLUDE AN ENTITY
28 THAT RECEIVES MORE THAN 50% OF ITS GROSS RECEIPTS FROM:

1 (I) A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION DESCRIBED IN 26 U.S.C. § 527;
2 OR

(II) ANY ORGANIZATION THAT MAINTAINS STATUS UNDER 26
U.S.C. § 501(c)(4), (5), OR (6).

5 (B) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO ANY PROCUREMENT CONTRACT FOR
6 PRINT OR DIGITAL ADVERTISING TO BE PUBLISHED OR BROADCAST OUTSIDE
7 MARYLAND FOR THE PURPOSES OF:

8 (1) PROMOTING TOURISM TO THE STATE; OR

10 (C) A UNIT SHALL STRUCTURE PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES TO ACHIEVE
11 AN OVERALL GOAL OF 50% OF THE UNIT'S TOTAL DOLLAR VALUE OF PROCUREMENT
12 CONTRACTS FOR PRINT OR DIGITAL ADVERTISING BEING MADE DIRECTLY TO LOCAL
13 NEWS ORGANIZATIONS.

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