

SECTION 3 OF THE VILLAGE OF CHEVY CHASE

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Testimony in Support of House Bill (HB) 381/ Senate Bill (SB) 368

Good afternoon. My name is Andy Leon Harney and I am the Village Manager of Section 3 of the Village of Chevy Chase. We are a very small community, just 282 homes. We are one of the 157 municipalities in the state, many of them small enough to allow for hand delivery and certainly mail delivery of Charter Amendments at a cost that could be far less than newspaper ads in some of the larger markets.

We recently had to add a two-sentence amendment to our charter. As the law stands, we were required to run an advertisement each week over 4 weeks in a "newspaper of general circulation." Unfortunately, the law defines a newspaper of general circulation as one that is offered for sale. In some jurisdictions, like ours, that means the law required that we advertise the charter amendment in the only newspaper left standing. That requirement cost us \$2,035 for a classified ad that was approximately 1" by 3".

If the idea is to disseminate a change to the residents most affected, we did that. The change was discussed at a public Council meeting and printed on our website. The reasons for the change and the actual wording of the amendment were published in our monthly newsletter, which is delivered to each home in our village. It seems unlikely that with a paper the size of the Washington Post, the only local newspaper of general circulation in our area, any of our residents read the small ad.

It's probably safe to say that our residents are more likely to read their hometown newsletter, or a hand delivered postcard than the Friday classifieds.

The options presented by this bill would simply give small municipalities in certain large media markets another option to both notify their residents and save money. In our region, the possible loss of revenue for a newspaper like the Washington Post is likely to be insignificant.

I humbly ask you to consider my testimony and vote to support these modest amendments to the existing law.