



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 891: Income Tax - Local Newsroom Tax Credit

Ways and Means Committee

Thursday, February 13, 2025 - 1:00PM

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

The collapse of independent newsrooms poses a serious threat to our democracy and the civic well-being of our state and local communities. According to Northwestern University, there has been an average of five local newspapers closing every two weeks, with more than half of all American counties living in now so-called ‘news deserts’ with limited access to news¹.

Since 2008, 57% of newspaper newsroom jobs have been lost², 2900 local newspapers have closed since 2005, and 1,800 communities have lost their local newsroom since 2004³.

HB 891 provides needed financial relief to our local newsrooms, by establishing a refundable pay roll tax credit for five years of up to \$25,000 in the first year and \$15,000 in years two through five for each full-time local journalist.

This tax credit is available to news organizations which cover our local communities and have at least one full-time local journalist based in the state. The news organization must be covered by media liability insurance, disclose its ownership to the public, and have been publishing or broadcasting for at least a year. News organizations who are owned or funded by a political advocacy group are not eligible for this credit.

I urge the committee to give a favorable report on HB 891.

¹ Northwestern University. (n.d.). *The State of Local News 2023*. Local News Initiative.

<https://localnewsinitiative.northwestern.edu/projects/state-of-local-news/2023/>

² Walker, M. (2021, July 13). *U.S. newsroom employment has fallen 26% since 2008*. Pew Research Center.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/07/13/u-s-newsroom-employment-has-fallen-26-since-2008/>

³ *The Loss of Local News*. The Expanding News Desert. (2018, October 17).

<https://www.usnewsdeserts.com/reports/expanding-news-desert/>