



**TESTIMONY FOR**  
**SB0459 – Procurement – Advertising – Local News Organizations**  
**(Local Newspapers for Maryland Communities Act of 2026)**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Rosapepe  
**Committee:** Senate Budget and Taxation  
**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition  
**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, Cochair  
**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0459 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

SB0459 requires State agencies to ensure that at least 50% of their print and digital advertising dollars go directly to local news organizations. This is a simple, sensible step that strengthens Maryland’s media at a time when local journalism is under enormous strain. Local newsrooms are essential to public accountability, civic participation, and an informed electorate. When they weaken, our democracy weakens with them.

MLC leadership cherishes our subscriptions to *The Baltimore Banner*, *Maryland Matters*, and *The Baltimore Sun*. We believe these publications are part of the reason Maryland benefits from strong, responsive leadership—because they ask hard questions, provide context, and make government accessible to everyday residents. Speaking personally, I am in the process of dropping my *Washington Post* subscription for many reasons, mainly that I find that Maryland-based journalism serves our communities far better. SB0459 recognizes the value of that work and ensures that State advertising dollars support the news organizations that keep Marylanders informed.

This bill aligns with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. Our work depends on accurate, accessible reporting so that residents can understand what their government is doing and how to engage with it. When local news organizations struggle, the public loses a critical source of information. SB0459 helps sustain the outlets that make civic participation possible. For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0459.