

## FREDERICK NEWS POST

To: Budget & Tax Committee

From: Geordie Wilson, Publisher

Date: February 15, 2026

**Re: Frederick News Post FAVORABLE SB 459**

On behalf of **The Frederick News-Post**, we respectfully express our strong support for SB 459, a revenue-neutral policy to ensure that 50 percent of state advertising dollars are spent in Maryland with capable Maryland media companies.

This is a policy that both improves public communication efforts, by leveraging the unique local knowledge of trusted community media companies, and that strengthens the local information infrastructure Maryland communities rely on.

### **Why SB 459 Matters to Local News**

The economic foundation that once sustained local news — particularly advertising revenue — has shifted dramatically over the past two decades. A 2022 U.S. Government Accountability Office report documented long-term declines in advertising revenue and newsroom employment at local newspapers nationwide, resulting in reduced coverage in many communities. Maryland is fortunate that every jurisdiction still has a local news outlet. That is not a guarantee for the future.

When state advertising dollars are directed to Maryland-based media organizations, those dollars support:

- Reporters covering local government and public safety
- Editors ensuring accuracy and accountability
- Photographers, designers, and digital producers
- Printing, production, and distribution jobs
- Sales and marketing professionals who serve local businesses

Keeping advertising investments in Maryland strengthens local employment and preserves independent coverage that residents depend on.

### **About The Frederick News-Post and its capabilities**

The Frederick News-Post has served the Frederick County region for generations, and it has long been known as a responsive local news organization with a professional newsroom dedicated to covering the local government, schools, courts, public safety, business, and community life.

Today, it is also a modern media company with a full-service digital marketing agency that works with businesses and public institutions across Maryland.

As our industry has changed and the needs of our advertising customers have changed, we have adapted and developed a comprehensive suite of marketing and advertising services. Today, we place advertising in countless different mediums and channels — not just Frederick News Post products.

Our capabilities include:

- Print display advertising, of course, including inserts and custom print publications

- A full range of digital display advertising capabilities, from preferred placements on local media sites to targeted programmatic campaigns, including geographic, interest and demographic targeting, that reach readers across broad networks
- Digital audio and video campaigns, allowing us to reach users of streaming audio and video services, set-top boxes, and even outdoor screens at places like gas stations
- High-quality, opt-in email marketing campaigns, reaching people based on geographic, interest and demographic characteristics
- Social media advertising and strategy
- Search engine marketing (SEM), search engine optimization (SEO), and now generative engine optimization (GEO) to work with new artificial intelligence agents
- Full campaign integrations including custom landing pages, retargeting, and website development
- Event production and marketing, and community sponsorships
- Direct mail marketing
- Sophisticated campaign analytics, reporting, and performance optimization

We routinely design, execute, and measure multi-platform campaigns tailored to specific audiences. We understand local demographics, regional media consumption habits, and the communities that state agencies are trying to reach.

Any communications service currently procured from out-of-state agencies can be delivered effectively by Maryland-based news organizations — often with greater local insight and stronger audience trust.

### **Proven Models in Other Jurisdictions**

SB 459 is modeled on approaches adopted in other cities and states that prioritize community media for government advertising. For example, New York City implemented a program directing advertising to community outlets. A 2022 study found that 282 local print and digital outlets were approved to receive city advertising in fiscal year 2021, with funding distributed across small and mid-sized publications — revenue many would not otherwise have received.

These models demonstrate that targeted advertising policies can meaningfully support local media while helping governments better reach diverse communities.

SB 459's requirement that at least 50 percent of state advertising spending prioritize Maryland-based media is not a handout, it is simply a procurement shift that creates a straightforward pathway for local outlets to serve as state vendors. News organizations like The Frederick News-Post already operate with the infrastructure, compliance capacity, and marketing expertise necessary to meet state procurement standards. We are ready to compete, to perform, and to deliver measurable results for Maryland agencies — while ensuring that public funds support Maryland jobs and Maryland communities.

SB 459 represents a practical, balanced approach that strengthens public communication and sustains the local news ecosystem at the same time.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.