



To: House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

From: Tim Nelson, Counsel to the Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association

Date: Submitted – February 6, 2026; Hearing – February 10, 2026

Re: House Bill 43

The Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association (“MDCD” or the “Association”)¹ appreciates the opportunity to submit this written testimony regarding House Bill 43, “Procurement - Advertising - Local News Organizations (Local Newspapers for Maryland Communities Act of 2026),” which legislation would require that units of State government spend 50% of their digital and print advertising expenditures with local news organizations. On behalf of the Association and its Members, which include approximately 20 television stations and 110 radio stations, MDCD urges a favorable report of House Bill 43.

As you may know, each MDCD Member broadcast station is licensed by the Federal Communications Commission and is required, pursuant to that license, to operate in and serve the public interest. MDCD’s Member stations embrace that mandate with passion and enthusiasm. Not only do MDCD’s Member stations provide critical news, weather, emergency, sports, traffic, health, and other information both on-air and online, they also participate in and sponsor events in the very communities in which their employees live and work. Yet local broadcasters face significant challenges as they aim to fulfill their unique role in the rapidly changing media ecosystem—many of them financial.

Producing high-quality, local broadcast news is an exceedingly costly endeavor. Broadcasters fund their on-air and digital operations through advertising dollars; advertising accounts for virtually all of the revenues for Maryland’s radio stations and roughly half of the revenues for the State’s television stations. Advertising revenues, however, have been declining sharply for years. The revolution in digital technology and the explosive growth of the Internet have led to a handful of giant, unregulated digital platforms dominating the advertising marketplace, including at the local level. This, in turn, has negatively impacted local broadcasters from a competitive standpoint. Advertisers and the critical revenues they provide to local stations have been diverted away from the broadcasters and local news organizations that produce accurate, trusted, objective, local journalism in communities across Maryland.

House Bill 43, by requiring units of State government to spend 50% of their print and digital advertising budget with local news organizations, appears designed to direct certain revenues into local newsrooms. That investment, in turn, will aid local journalism across Maryland, to the benefit

¹ The Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association is a voluntary, non-profit trade association that advocates for the interests of its member radio and television stations and, more generally, the interests of broadcasting in Maryland, Delaware, and Washington, D.C.

of the State's citizens. Indeed, House Bill 43 is an investment in local news and communities across Maryland.

The Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association appreciates Delegate Foley's leadership on this issue, and for the reasons set forth above, MDCCD urges a favorable report of House Bill 43.

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