



**To: House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee**

**From: Tim Nelson and Pearson Cost, Counsel to the Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association**

**Date: Submitted – April 3, 2026; Hearing – April 7, 2026**

**Re: Senate Bill 459**

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The Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association (“MDCD” or the “Association”)<sup>1</sup> appreciates the opportunity to submit this written testimony regarding Senate Bill 459, “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 advertising expenditures with Maryland 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 Senate Bill 459.

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.

Senate Bill 459, by requiring units of State government to spend 50% of their advertising budget with Maryland news organizations, appears designed to direct certain revenues into local

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

newsrooms. That investment will aid local journalism across Maryland to the benefit of the State's citizens.

The Maryland-DC-Delaware Broadcasters Association appreciates the Committee's consideration of this issue, and for the reasons set forth above, MDDB enthusiastically urges a favorable report of Senate Bill 459.

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