



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

455 NORTH REXFORD DRIVE ▪ BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90210

Julian A. Gold, M.D., Mayor

July 12, 2023

The Honorable Thomas Umberg
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O. St, Suite 2100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 886 (Wicks) California Journalism Preservation Act
City of Beverly Hills – SUPPORT IF AMENDED

Dear Chair Umberg:

On behalf of the City of Beverly Hills, I write to you to express our support for AB 886 (Wicks), the California Journalism Preservation Act (CJPA), provided there are amendments to address our concerns. We recognize and appreciate the CJPA's efforts to restore financial stability to our state's newsrooms and address the decline in local news outlets. The rise of digital platforms and their monopolistic practices have unquestionably impacted our local media landscape, leading to job losses and closure of media outlets, which in turn leads to an uninformed public and a weakened democracy.

In Beverly Hills, we have three adjudicated newspapers: The Beverly Hills Courier with a circulation of 24,400 accounts; The Beverly Hills Weekly with a circulation of 14,950 accounts; and The Beverly Press with a circulation of 7,420 accounts. We are concerned the current structure of the CJPA could potentially marginalize smaller media outlets like the ones serving Beverly Hills. The distribution of the journalism usage fee, calculated as a percentage of the covered platform's advertising revenue, could inadvertently favor larger media conglomerates, leaving smaller media outlets, such as the three in Beverly Hills, with insufficient resources.

To ensure the funds from the CJPA truly benefit local journalism, we strongly suggest amending the bill to explicitly direct a significant portion of the usage fees towards smaller media outlets. Doing so would provide much-needed support to these entities and help maintain a diverse, vibrant media landscape in California.

We further endorse the requirement that at least 70 percent of the funds received from the CJPA be spent on journalists and support staff, as it directly invests in the people who produce news content and ensure its quality. Additionally, the prohibition against retaliation by covered platforms against eligible journalism providers who demand their due

compensation is a crucial safeguard to protect the autonomy and rights of our news organizations.

While we agree with the overall intent of the CJPA to strengthen our state's newsrooms, we firmly believe a balanced distribution of the usage fees, especially towards smaller media outlets, is vital in ensuring news in smaller areas continues to focus on issues important to them. By doing so, we not only preserve a diverse news environment but also encourage innovative, local reporting which truly serves our communities.

We kindly ask for your consideration and support for these amendments to the CJPA. Doing so will signal your commitment to preserving local journalism in California and fostering a media environment which supports all news providers, regardless of their size. For these reasons, the City of Beverly Hills has adopted a SUPPORT IF AMENDED AB 886 (Wicks).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julian A. Gold". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey rectangular background.

Julian A. Gold, M.D.
Mayor, City of Beverly Hills

cc: The Honorable Buffy Wicks, Assemblymember, 14th District
The Honorable Ben Allen, Senator, 24th District
The Honorable Rick Zbur, Assemblymember, 51st District
Andrew K. Antwih, Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange