

MARIA CANTWELL
WASHINGTON



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

April 18, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

We urge you to ensure that any future stimulus package makes more local newspapers and radio and television broadcasters eligible for small business assistance under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), created by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Up to several thousand newspapers and hundreds of local radio and television stations across the country were cut out of existing programs by the U.S. Small Business Administration's affiliation rule, which restricts assistance to companies owned or controlled by larger entities. Even though these news outlets may be owned by larger groups, they operate independently.

Ensuring that local news outlets remain viable at this critical time is not only a matter of fairness, but is essential to public health. Local newspapers, radio, and television stations provide important local content that keeps their communities informed. People rely on local newspapers and broadcasters to cover school and business closures, to widely communicate public health guidance, and to combat life-threatening misinformation. The CARES Act waived the affiliation rule for hotels and restaurants allowing them to benefit from small business assistance, and the same consideration should extend to local news outlets in light of their vital role in maintaining public health.

At the same time, local newspapers, radio, and television stations have lost major advertising revenue because of COVID-19's devastating impact on the American economy. According to the News Media Alliance, newspapers have lost up to 50 percent of advertising revenue for the second quarter of the year. According to a nationwide survey conducted by the Interactive Advertising Bureau, traditional media, including local radio and television stations, will see a 43 percent decline in advertising revenue for March and April. The National Association of Broadcasters has found that some local broadcasters have even reported that up to 90 percent of their advertising revenue has been lost.

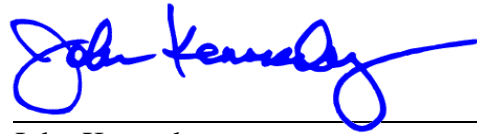
Waiving SBA's affiliation rules for local newspapers and broadcasters and ensuring that financial assistance flows to the local affiliate, not the parent company, would allow these small, local operations to be eligible for much-needed financial relief.

Local newspapers and broadcasters have been hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis, are essential for maintaining a well-informed public, and deserve our help.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



John Kennedy
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator