**Democracy/Free Press/Misinformation Sample Editorial**

America’s free press is in crisis.

Today, many local newspapers are under incredible financial pressure and in jeopardy of going out of business because the control of access to trustworthy news online has become concentrated between two Big Tech companies: Facebook and Google.They set the rules for how, where and when we see journalistic content online and how much revenue is made – and by whom – from the hard work of journalists.

Big Tech’s dominance over news distribution and the ad sales it drives threatens quality journalism, and the cost of inaction – the decline of local news – is too great to continue to ignore. In recent years, we have all seen how critical the free press is to a functioning democracy, as the spread of dangerous misinformation online has permeated our culture.

Big Tech platforms are built to favor content that drive clicks which, in turn, favors extreme and outrageous misinformation. They undervalue quality news content and, as a result, the information ecosystem has become increasingly confusing and unhealthy. As newsrooms across America have downsized or shuttered, Facebook has filled the void with untrustworthy sources, becoming America’s *de facto* local news source. Additionally, these platforms’ revenue models are structurally built around distributing content that separates us, which could not be more alarming in our highly fractured and partisan environment.

The government cannot regulate news under the First Amendment, leaving the duopoly of Facebook and Google free to handle it as they see fit. Ironically, U.S. antitrust laws prevent small and local papers from coming together to negotiate fair compensation from the tech giants for the news content they pay to produce. Though this crisis may seem insurmountable, given the stranglehold Big Tech has on journalism, we have a viable solution.

We are askingour members of Congress to support the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act (JCPA), a bipartisan bill that that is specifically focused on addressing Google and Facebook’s threat to the free press. The JCPA would provide a temporary, limited antitrust safe harbor for news publishers to collectively negotiate with Facebook and Google for fair compensation for the use of their content. It’s narrowly tailored to ensure that coordination by news publishers is only in the interest of protecting trustworthy, quality journalism.

Our Founders understood that quality journalism is key to sustaining civic society. This is why a free press is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, and it’s why we must ensure that the people who create journalistic content are compensated for their work. It is imperative to take reasonable and meaningful steps to protect this important institution. With the passage of the JCPA, all news publishers, especially small and local newspapers, would finally be able to ask the tech platforms for the compensation they need, and deserve.

We applaud those members of Congress across the country and on both sides of the aisle who have already shown their commitment to local journalism by co-sponsoring the JCPA. But we need support from every member of Congress. We are askingour members of Congress, to support the JCPA, which would give news publishers the ability to seek fair compensation for use of their content, and which would allow them to continue to invest in the critical newsgathering and reporting on which Americans depend.

We hope the [STATE] congressional delegation will agree that the honest, quality reporting we provide for our community – and the future of all local journalism – is worth fighting for. We urge them to join their colleagues in co-sponsoring the JCPA today.