Paris, July 25th, 2022

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
Chairwoman,  
Subcommittee on Competition  
Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights  
United States Senate  
425 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Lee  
Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Competition  
Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights United States Senate  
361A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David Cicilline  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial and Administrative Law  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2233 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Buck  
Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial and Administrative Law, U.S. House of Representatives  
2455 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Klobuchar, Chairman Cicilline, Ranking Member Lee, and Ranking Member Buck:

The World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) believes that freedom of expression is a fundamental right and a touchstone for all our freedoms. And press freedom, enhanced by solid independent news publishing companies, is one of its fundamental pillars. Independent news publishers carry out their public interest role while at the same time responding to commercial imperatives. As such, we have been closely watching H.R. 1735 / S.673, the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act (JCPA).

In the past decade, our global membership have shared a gripping concern for the sustainability of the industry. News publishers are facing shrinking print revenues and a shift of a large portion of their revenues to the global online platforms. Organisational transformation is well underway and the branch has taken radical measures to accompany its change in the business model. In particular, it has redoubled its efforts to compensate for the loss of advertising revenue, focusing on acquiring digital subscribers.

This shift to a model focused on digital subscription revenues, or readers’ donations, has benefited publishers in a position to win over a scalable audience, but many others face a long road ahead. According to our World
Press Trends research, reader revenue is expected to bring in around a third of total income in 2021-22, but advertising remains the leading revenue source. In 2022, digital advertising is expected to surpass two-thirds of total media ad spending, with news content creators accounting for about one-third of digital advertising spending.

Today's scenario, where a fair share of the digital advertising revenue do not accrue to the news media industry and compensate for the efforts to produce quality content, puts at risk the sustainability of the news sector itself.

With the understanding that a free and diverse press is the backbone of a healthy and vibrant democracy, ensuring a level playing field in the discussions between the news content creator sectors and their technology partners, is crucial in the quest for sustainability.

It is our view that JCPA would help address these problems by allowing publishers to come together to negotiate with other players in the ecosystem. A mechanism to ensure open discussion and equitable compensation to both big and small news publishers in the United States would benefit everyone.

Journalism is critical to a functioning democracy, and the price of inaction – the disappearance of local news in the U.S. – is too great. Therefore, we urge you to support news publishers across the United States and support the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act.

Sincerely,

Elena Perotti

Executive Director Public Affairs and Media Policy
WAN-IFRA

WAN-IFRA is the World Association of News Publishers, the global organisation of the world’s press. Founded in 1948, the association gained formal consultative status to UNESCO in 1949, to the UN in 1950, and to the Council of Europe in 1974. Today, WAN-IFRA membership comprises 3,000 news publishing companies, technology entrepreneurs, and 60 member publisher associations representing 18,000 publications in 120 countries. Our mission is to protect the rights of journalists and publishers around the world to operate independent media. We provide our members with expertise and services to innovate and prosper in a digital world and perform their crucial role in society.