

February 1, 2022

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

Dear Chairwoman Klobuchar:

I write on behalf of the Star Tribune, the largest daily news organization in Minnesota to express our unequivocal support for the JCPA. This legislation is important and ***urgently needed*** to aid in the survival of local journalism and local news.

The past two years have been stressful for the nation and for the people in Minnesota. They have needed to know and understand the truth about many things, from the facts about Covid-19, how to sign up for vaccinations, where to get tests, what was happening in terms of case numbers, school closures, and work from home to the horrific events which surrounded the murder of George Floyd and Daunte Wright and the criminal trials of the perpetrators. During that time, our news organization worked round the clock to provide our readers and community up to date and valuable information.

Meanwhile, Facebook and Google exploited the content of our newspaper and website, depriving us of the revenue critical to the performance of this important newsgathering. Sadly, millions of Americans get their news from Facebook and Google today. And news organizations are paid pennies from those large multinational organizations, who enjoy an incremental benefit from the news content.

Local journalism is in crisis. In Minnesota alone, with the rise of big tech over the past decades, 82 newspapers have closed and today eight counties have only one local news outlet. This trend is appalling and underlines the need for this legislation now.

Other countries have recognized that this system requires a fair exchange for the significant value news organizations and local journalism contribute to those two gigantic companies. Local journalism in America needs congressional intervention and it needs it now.

The JCPA is specifically and reasonably tailored to ensure local news can:

1. Negotiate together for fair compensation. Today we are mostly numerous small and independent local organizations. We do not have the resources to negotiate with the two behemoths of the tech world. And we are prevented from doing so as a collective by the antitrust laws. We need a safe harbor, which the act provides, so that as a group, we can negotiate for fair compensation for the use of our content.
2. Have an enforcement mechanism which will ensure fair compensations after a period of negotiation.
3. Have a return of revenue that ensures that the fair value of local news flows back to those who create it. This will ensure the health of journalism for generations to come.

Thank you for considering this letter as you consider the JCPA before you.

Local journalism is critical to an educated and civil society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Klingensmith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Michael J. Klingensmith