**Why an Anti-Trust Safe Harbor Is the Answer the News Business Needs**

News consumption is growing exponentially, but for the past decade, the revenue to news publishers has been on a decline. This is, in large part, because of the unbalanced relationship between news publishers and tech platforms. But that relationship could be changing thanks to the bipartisan introduction of the “Journalism Competition and Preservation Act” by House Antitrust Subcommittee Chairman David Cicilline (D-RI) and House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Doug Collins (R-GA). A bipartisan companion bill was also introduced by Senator John Neely Kennedy (R-LA), Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Ranking Member of the Senate Antitrust Subcommittee.

The bill, which would provide news publishers a safe harbor in which to collectively negotiate with platforms like Google and Facebook, could help news producers receive the fair distribution and monetization terms we’ve long been fighting to get from the duopoly.

Because of their market dominance – and access to billions of users – the major tech platforms set the rules for news publishers and determine how journalism is displayed, prioritized and monetized. They also capture the vast majority of all digital advertising dollars because of their unique ability to collect consumer data across the web.

All of this has degraded the relationship between news readers and publishers and rewarded low quality “click-bait” over quality information from real journalists. It has also greatly reduced the financial ability of publishers to invest in newsrooms at a time when our society most needs great, substantive reporting.

It is simply not possible for any individual news publisher to change the basic terms offered by the online behemoths. They are simply much too big and much too influential.

However, there is power in numbers, which is what we need in order to have a fighting chance. The antitrust safe harbor bill would provide a four-year window for news publishers to collectively negotiate for fair terms that would flow earned subscription and advertising dollars back to the publishers, while protecting and preserving Americans’ right to access quality news. Parameters included in the bill ensure that these negotiations would strictly benefit Americans and news publishers at-large, not just one or a few publishers.

If passed, this bill would allow our industry to more fully control our product by allowing market forces, not two companies, to determine how and for what price our content is offered. It would allow everyone from small local publications to major online publishers the opportunity to receive a return on their investment and therefore sustain quality journalism, which is necessary for an informed democracy and civic society.