To: Respective CT legislators

From: David Fortier, Executive Editor, Bristol Edition, Bristol, CT

Re: HB 5978-- AN ACT ESTABLISHING A REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT FOR NEWS ORGANIZATIONS THAT COVER LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE STATE

As a hyperlocal nonprofit online newspaper, The Bristol Edition has for its goal bringing quality journalism to its community, which is a commendable project in itself because when local news is badly neglected, community life suffers. Numerous studies across the nation address this phenomenon. Conjoined with this goal is creating a viable business model that becomes an incubator for young journalists and further discussion of the benefits of locally owned and supported news organizations and community life.

Social media has been unable to fill this void, creating in its wake a mechanism for separating people into silos rather than affording them an opportunity to join in a forum where other voices are heard and information available in a space that allows a person to perhaps think about this information before being drawn into a virtual vortex.

With community building in mind and a public forum for its model, our little newspaper, scaled down for the purpose of serving its community, started with volunteers and now, with the aid of donors and a grant, is turning the corner to becoming a viable business.

As a small business, albeit a nonprofit, we intend to not only inform our community and add to its quality of life, but also to employ news professionals, making us contributors on a different level. As our financial prospects have improved, we are attracting reporters, who contribute to our goal of providing quality journalism, and we are attracting readers, who are starving for more news about our community. The two go hand-in-hand.

While we grow, the state can assist us, and others like us, with financial incentives to accelerate this critical project of bringing back local news, not only in name, but in practice. That practice attracts local talent from our schools and our communities, and along with it, readers who will come to support our efforts once they experience the commitment and the connection between local news, local ownership and local life.

By supporting HB 5978, you support your communities and allow them to experience a more robust experience of community life.

Thank you