Name: Gregory Stroud
Title: Editor in Chief
Organization or Agency: CT Examiner
Topic: HB05978 - AAE A REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT FOR NEWS ORGANIZATIONS THAT COVER LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE STATE.
Opposes

Testimony:

Members of the Committee:

I am the owner and editor of CT Examiner, one of the few news organizations in the state focused on providing high-quality nonpartisan local news.

As a 6-year-old startup, we are also one of the few organizations in the state that is growing, thriving even. I strongly believe that subscribers, not advertisers, are the future of local news, and that this model can only work with a modest paywall. Our numbers are proof of concept.
That said, the business is a bit of slog -- and I appreciate your desire to support journalism – but not with HB 5978.
In particular, in the age of Substack, Tiktok, podcasts, freelancers, bloggers, and highly-partisan news of varying quality, I do not believe the government or any instrument of the government (or frankly any news organization) should be in the position of delineating what is or what isn't qualifying journalism or local news.

It's an invitation to mischief, and for a thousand frankly lousy news sources to bloom in an effort to soak up money rather than write the news. Do you mean to propose a basic minimum income for anyone who writes about their local community? And who are you or I to say, that an organization simply peddles propaganda, parodies or untruths – or gets the news wrong enough – and should be disqualified?
Looking at my bottom line, it would be much more helpful if legislators could address the double-digit cost increases of health insurance for my employees. Or perhaps you could offer aid for journalism graduates in paying off student loans. Or tackle the generally high cost of living in Connecticut compared to neighboring states.

But please, please, avoid any aid that requires a clear definition of journalism worthy of public support – because there isn't one.