

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Competition Policy,  
Antitrust, and Consumer Rights  
U.S. Senate  
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear the Honorable Amy Klobuchar and the Honorable Mike Lee:

My name is Michael Yamashita and I am the Publisher of the Bay Area Reporter in San Francisco, California – since 1971, the nation’s oldest news publication serving the LGBTQ communities. We are just one of many independent publishers operating as small businesses serving specific, diverse communities, whether they be local, ethnic, non-English language, etc., whose viability has been compromised by dominant tech platforms.

I am reaching out to request your support for H.R. 1735 / S.673, the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act (JCPA). This bipartisan bill is critically important to protecting the future of high-quality, local journalism in California and across the country.

A free and diverse press is the backbone of a healthy and vibrant democracy. Yet the control of access to trustworthy news online has become concentrated in the hands of two dominant tech platforms, Facebook and Google. Despite news being the reason for which a significant portion of users turn to Facebook and Google, these companies leverage their dominance over the digital marketplace to set the rules for news publishers and determine how journalism is displayed, prioritized, and monetized.

Existing laws make it difficult for news publishers – especially small, local and regional publishers – to obtain fair compensation from the platforms for the use of their content. As a result, the newspapers that are vital to bringing our communities together are strained financially if not struggling to survive. The JCPA would help address these problems by allowing publishers such as us to come together to negotiate with the platforms for the compensation they deserve.

Recent experiences in Australia and Europe demonstrate that other countries recognize the disparity in bargaining power between news publishers and Facebook and Google and are moving towards a new compensation model for publishers, one that ensures that equitable terms are offered to all publishers and that platforms participate in good faith.

The moment to act in the U.S. is now. It is more important than ever to protect quality journalism and ensure that the people who create journalistic content are compensated fairly for their often-painstaking work.

Journalism is critical to a functioning democracy, and the price of inaction – the disappearance of local news – is too great. I urge you to stand with Californian journalists in support of the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act.

Sincerely,

Michael Yamashita

Publisher/President  
Bay Area Reporter  
San Francisco