

NO ONE SAYS IT BETTER

February 18, 2010

The Honorable Andres Ayala
State Representative
District 128
Legislative Office Building - Room 4022
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Representative Ayala:

As President and CEO of the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, a membership organization representing 1,000 businesses, I write to you today to request that you oppose any attempt to eliminate the requirement that municipalities post legal notices in the local newspapers. There are several reasons that I would like to share with you why eliminating this requirement is not good for the business community as well as the general public.

Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, is the public's right to know of important government transactions that may, and frequently do, impact the community. It is commonly known amongst members of the business community that the most reliable source of information on such matters as government procurement, planning and zoning actions, public hearings, and a variety of other public projects is the legal notice that appears in the local media. The internet, as yet, does not satisfy this important need. In fact, I believe that should the legal notice requirement in the local newspaper be eliminated and substituted by internet postings, the small technically unsophisticated businessperson would be at a distinct disadvantage. Certainly, people that do not have home access to a computer would find it a hardship to become informed of these important notices. This would include a fairly large segment of our elderly population.

Also, at a time when there is an unhealthy lack of trust in our governmental and institutional bodies it is more important than ever that our citizens be informed of important government action by an independent source that has the necessary tools to verify the information provided. Transparency in government is a huge issue. A change that would allow the government body to be the sole provider and publisher of important government action does not support our democratic ideals and certainly does not allow for the necessary checks and balances that help ensure the protection of our need to know of government actions in a timely and unbiased fashion.

I applaud efforts to reduce government spending in these difficult economic times. I am also aware that the savings that will result in each community from eliminating this particular mandate is miniscule when compared to the public's right to know.

It is for these reasons that I ask that you do not eliminate the requirement that municipalities post legal notices in the local newspapers.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul S. Timpanelli
President and CEO

PUBLIC NOTICES MUST REMAIN PUBLIC

KEEP PUBLIC NOTICES IN YOUR NEWSPAPER!

Pending legislation may remove your right to read public notices in newspapers, moving them from the public domain to the internet. We're concerned. And you should be, too.

Public notices are an important tool in assuring an informed citizenry. They have helped develop America into a participatory democracy for hundreds of years and where it counts the most: how your tax dollars are spent, how policy is made and how our futures are charted.

They are located in easy-to-find sections of your newspaper. And they are fully accessible to everyone - unlike the internet, which is not accessible to everyone.

Less than 10% of the U.S. population views a local, state or federal government website daily, according to the May 2009 release of U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of Resident Population.

This means more than nine out of ten people may never see a given notice.

This compares dramatically to the fact that 83% of adults read a community newspaper every week, according to the National Newspaper Association.

Furthermore, a public notice printed in the newspaper produces a permanent record. The internet does not, nor does it assure timeliness. And a newspaper is archived for years; not subject to computer crashes and hackers.

Newspapers are easily verifiable, fully transparent and represent a secure third party

who has nothing to gain from any notice. Connecticut's recent ethical lapses shed a glaring light on the full meaning of this problem. It's like putting the fox in charge of the hen house.

Every public notice, which runs in a Connecticut daily newspaper, is automatically uploaded to that newspaper's web site and CTPublicNotices.org.

Newspapers are your watchdogs. Don't let that role be changed now. Voice your opinion.

**To keep your notices in the newspaper,
contact your local elected officials or:**

Governor Jodi Rell - 860.566.4840

Senate Democrats - 860.240.8600

House Democrats - 860.240.8500

Senate Republicans - 860.240.8800

House Republicans - 860.240.8700

Visit www.ctdailynews.com to contact your legislator today