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8-17-09

February 26, 2010


An Open Letter to Our Elected Officials:

At the regular meeting held on February 18, 2010, the Board of Directors of the Greater Meriden Chamber of Commerce debated the issue and then unanimously directed me to write this letter to you concerning the proposal to eliminate the requirement that legal notices are printed in local newspapers. I am writing to express the Chamber's opposition to the pending legislation that would remove public notices from local papers.

While there has been great interest in reducing government spending, any cost reduction should NOT be done at the expense of openness and transparency. Adding public notices to municipal web sites would improve the accessibility of public notices but the local newspaper reader should not be excluded from the flow of information.

We at the Greater Meriden Chamber of Commerce urge you to oppose the elimination of the requirement that proper legal notices get posted in local newspapers.

Sincerely,



Séan W. Moore
President

Leading and Promoting Business and Community Since 1896
Offices at 3 Colony Street, Suite 301, Meriden, CT 06451
Ph: 203.235.7901 Fax: 203.686.0172 Email: info@meridenchamber.com
Web: www.meridenchamber.com

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