



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## Empire State Local News Coalition Celebrates Inclusion of \$90 Million Local Media Tax Credit in Final FY 2025 New York State Budget

SENATOR BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL April 21, 2024

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First-in-the-nation bill incentivizes the retention and hiring of local journalists

**NEW YORK** – Today, Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature unveiled the final state budget, including a payroll tax credit for local news outlets, modeled on the Local Journalism Sustainability Act, in the sweeping package. With the passage of this bill, New York is now the first state in the nation to incentivize hiring and retaining local

journalists. This game changer for the local news industry comes just months after the launch of the Empire State Local News Coalition, an unprecedented, grassroots campaign powered by more than 200 community newspapers across the state.

**Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, the Senate bill sponsor, said:** “I’m elated that our first-in-the-nation Local Journalism Sustainability Act is passing in the state budget. A thriving local news industry is vital to the health of our democracy and it’s our responsibility to help ensure New Yorkers have access to independent and community-focused journalism. Thank you to Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Governor Hochul, our Assembly Sponsor Woerner and the over 200 local publications of the Empire State Local News Coalition who helped pass our bill. Our efforts will help ensure that our democracy will not die in darkness.”

The program--\$30 million per year for three years--allows each eligible newspaper and broadcast business to receive a 50% refundable tax credit against the first \$50,000 of an employee's salary, up to a total of \$300,000 per business. \$4 million will be allocated to incentivize print and broadcast businesses to hire new journalists. The remaining \$26 million will be split evenly between businesses with fewer than 100 employees and those with more than 100 employees, ensuring that hyperlocal, independent news organizations have a fair shot at access to these funds.

After stalling for years, the Local Journalism Sustainability Act catapulted into a top legislative priority this session following the early-2024 founding of the Empire State Local News Coalition and the coalition’s mobilization of support from hundreds of New York hometown papers as well as a broad range stakeholders from around the country, including the Rebuild Local News Coalition, Microsoft, and El Diario. Organized labor including NYS

AFL-CIO, CWA District 1, and national and local news guilds also played a critical role in mobilizing support for this historic bill.

"The Empire State Local News Coalition is thrilled by the state budget's inclusion of a payroll tax credit for local news outlets modeled on the Local Journalism Sustainability Act. New York is now the first state in the nation to incentivize hiring and retaining local journalists—a critical investment given that hundreds of New York's newspapers have closed since 2004, leaving too many New York communities without access to vital local information. The objectivity of this credit shows that there is a fair way for public policy to support local news without jeopardizing journalistic integrity. This program is a model for other states across the U.S. to follow as communities across the country raise their voices to save local news" said **Zachary Richner, founder of the Empire State Local News Coalition.**

"We're incredibly proud of the 200 newspapers in our coalition, which built an unprecedented grassroots movement in support of saving New York's local news industry in a few short months. We're especially grateful to Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, whose tireless advocacy for this tax credit was instrumental in moving it through the legislative process. The coalition thanks Governor Hochul, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie, Assembly Sponsor Carrie Woerner, and the entire legislature for supporting this industry-saving policy, and we look forward to continuing our advocacy for local news in the years to come," Richner continued. "Other states and stakeholders interested in replicating this playbook and hearing about lessons learned should reach out to us at [info@savenylocalnews.com](mailto:info@savenylocalnews.com)."

Since launching in February, the coalition has quickly mobilized stakeholders across the state to rally behind the bill. In addition to rallying with grassroots advocates in Westchester and Albany, members led petition drives, letter-writing campaigns, editorials, and

advertisements sounding the alarm on the decline of local journalism.

New York's leadership on this issue could change the course of local journalism in the U.S. The budget's inclusion of this tax credit comes at a watershed moment for the journalism industry: New York State has experienced hundreds of newspaper closures in the past few decades.

### **About the Empire State Local News Coalition**

Comprising more than 200 print and online newspapers, the Empire State Local News Coalition launched in 2024 to advocate for sound public policy that ensures the important work of local news organizations can continue across New York state. Through our independent journalism, we aim to serve, inform, uplift, and protect New Yorkers. We care deeply about our local communities as well as the future of New York's free press. For more information, visit [SaveNYLocalNews.com](https://www.savenylocalnews.com).

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2023-S625D**

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- Introduced
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
- In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor

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Provides a payroll tax credit for compensation of journalists; and to provide for the repeal of such provisions

January 05, 2023

In Senate Committee [Budget and Revenue](#)

Sponsored by [Brad Hoylman-Sigal](#)

Do you support this bill?