



PRESS RELEASE
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Editing the Lede on Small Business Advertising

Sen. Martinez, NYS Legislators, Business Leaders, & Local News Orgs Rally in Support of First-of-Its-Kind Small Business Tax Credit.

ALBANY, N.Y. – New York State Sen. Monica R. Martinez joined fellow legislators, business leaders and local news organizations at the Capitol to rally in support of the [Lift Our Communities, Advertise Locally \(LOCAL\) Act](#), which would establish a new, first-of-its-kind, tax credit for small businesses advertising in local media outlets. The proposal, sponsored by Sen. Martinez and Assemblymember Jen Lunsford, would create a refundable tax credit covering 80% of a business’s first \$5,000 in local advertising costs, up to a \$4,000 maximum per year. If enacted, the incentive would be available to businesses beginning in 2026, with 60% of the credits reserved for minority-, women-, and disabled veteran-owned firms.

"Communities are built on connections with neighbors, and the same is true for small businesses," said **Sen. Martinez**. "The LOCAL Act supports this relationship by encouraging these community-based businesses to advertise with the media outlets already trusted by the neighbors they are committed to serving. This incentive helps small businesses grow while preserving the local journalism New Yorkers rely on."

"The LOCAL Act is about more than just advertising – it’s about investing in the economic health of our local community and investing in the kind of local journalism that we need now more than ever," said **Assemblymember Lunsford**. "By providing small businesses with the tools to connect with their neighbors and supporting the local journalism that keeps us informed, this legislation strengthens the foundation of our local economies. It’s a smart, innovative solution that ensures businesses and residents can thrive together across New York State."

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According to a [study](#) issued by the Medill School of Journalism, Media & Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University, an average of 2.5 local newspapers per week ceased operations in 2023. This has resulted in over half of all U.S. counties now having limited access to reliable local news, and more than 200 counties being considered "news deserts." For New York state, that decline has been even more pronounced, with 190 weekly newspapers closing down since 2004 in what is often called the media capital of the world. In the absence of dependable local media outlets, this void is often filled by news feeds and information generated by algorithms that may at times promote editorialized or misinformation.

But, according to supporters, this headline can be changed by encouraging Main Streets to advertise in their hometown papers.

In a letter being circulated to the governor and legislative leaders by more than 15 business organizations from across the state, including the Long Island Association, the groups have called for the passage of the act, stating: "As members of New York's business community, we know firsthand how essential access to affordable advertising is for small enterprises," and urging them "to include the LOCAL Act in the final budget to help strengthen small businesses, sustain local journalism, and foster economic growth throughout New York."

Their urging reflects the importance of local journalism in keeping communities informed and connected and represents the kind of marketplace of information and ideas small businesses seek to access to drive growth.

"The LOCAL Act is a win-win-win for local businesses, local news, and local communities," said **Zachary Richner, Founding Member of the Empire State Local News Coalition**. "These institutions are intricately connected and work together to create the vibrant communities that New Yorkers love. Thank you to Senator Martinez and Assemblymember Lunsford for crafting creative policy that not only recognizes these institutions as pillars of local communities but also supports their mutually beneficial relationship."

Senator Dean Murray, Ranking Member of the Senate Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business Committee said, "Advertising locally promotes local media, local businesses and contributes to local economic activity. This is the very foundation of our economy that is driven by local small businesses."

"The LOCAL Act is a smart, common-sense approach to supporting the economic backbone of New York's towns: small businesses," said **Rich Schaffer, Town of Babylon Supervisor**. "Now more than ever, New York's

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leaders must prioritize advancing creative solutions like the LOCAL Act to ensure small businesses across our state have the tools, resources and support they need to thrive.”

“By making community advertising for small businesses more accessible and affordable, this proposed act will help them with their marketing strategy and customer engagement while simultaneously supporting local media outlets, which are also small companies,” said **Matt Cohen, President & CEO of the Long Island Association**. “The legislation is a win-win, and we look forward to its passage this session.”

“The Long Island African American Chamber of Commerce applauds the introduction of the LOCAL Act, which will empower minority-owned small businesses on Long Island and across New York,” said **Phil Andrews, President of the Long Island African American Chamber of Commerce**. “Local media is a uniquely trusted voice for the Black community, and the ability to affordably advertise in local media outlets provides an important opportunity for our member small businesses to connect with their neighbors and customers. The LOCAL Act is helping to foster a more inclusive and vibrant economy on Long Island and beyond.”

“Small businesses are the engines that drive New York's economy, but they are struggling with changing consumer habits and rising costs,” said **Ashley E. Ranslow, New York State Director for the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)**. “Providing opportunities for tax relief makes it a little more affordable for small businesses to operate and helps Main Street businesses compete in a difficult economic environment.”

“The LOCAL Act is a great idea. Helping New York's small businesses and its community news outlets at the same time will have so many benefits for communities. It also helps local news outlets thrive while preserving editorial independence,” said **Steven Waldman, Chair of the Rebuild Local News Coalition**. “The Rebuild Local News Coalition enthusiastically endorses the legislation.”