

Please support choice for public notices.

Dear Legislator:

We are writing to support legislation that would give municipal boards in Vermont **the option** of posting legal and other public notices on web-based news media to satisfy statutory requirements for notifying the public.

Where there is currently no definition in statute that says a newspaper of record must be printed with ink on paper or be sent through the mails or be sold rather than be free, municipal attorneys routinely give the advice that to be safe, boards should advertise in expensive print publications, even if the only true newspaper in a jurisdiction is web-based.

This situation is unfortunate for three reasons:

1. The rates charged by traditional newsprint media are very high because the media have no competition. This situation is especially evident when a long or complicated notice must be printed in full. If an online option existed, the notice could be directly linked to from a smaller, less costly advertisement where the information could be published in total.
2. A large portion of our population does not read print publications. These citizens skew younger and represent the future of state and local government in Vermont. Every year, more and more people get their news from web-based media, and these people are, in effect, left out of public notice.
3. In many areas of the state, there is little to no print coverage. In some places, web-based news media has provided access to the news that people want and need, and public notice advertising helps make that possible.

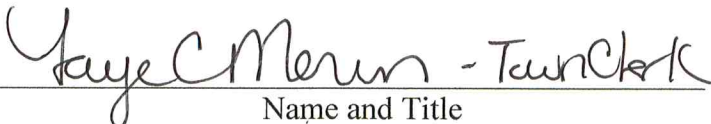
We appreciate your careful consideration of this update in policy and suggest a few common sense requirements, such as having a minimum percentage of staff-generated news from the web-based newspaper's coverage area and requiring that the editorial office be located in Vermont.


We urge you to give Vermont's cities, towns, and school districts credit for having their constituents' best interest at heart, whether by saving them money on legal advertising or making sure that everybody has the ability to receive the information that citizens in a democracy need.

We also believe that **encouraging young Vermonters** – who overwhelmingly get their information from web-based news media – to take up the responsibilities of self-government is crucial to the future of the state. This policy change would be a significant step in that direction.

While we are not endorsing any one medium, we do feel that having **more options** and the ability to use **local knowledge and discretion** are good things for all Vermonters.

Thank you for your consideration.


Name and Title


Town

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2. Second, large portions of our population either no longer read print publications or never have in the first place. These citizens skew younger and represent the future of state and local government in Vermont. Every year, more and more people get their news from web-based media and these people are – in effect – left out of public notice.
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Sheila Morse,
Name and Title

11/8/2018
date

Jeffery
Town

Selectboard Chair

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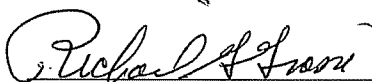
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Name and Title
Selectboard chair

January 16, 2018
date

Hartford
Town

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 chair 1/9/18
Name and Title date


Town

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Name and Title
John Haverstick
Pittsford Town Manager

1/18/2018
date

PITTSFORD, VT
Town

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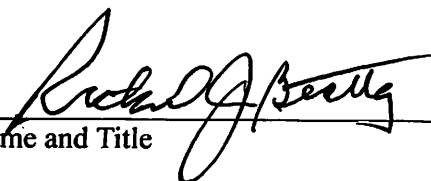
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1/8/18
date


Town