

March 12, 2021

The Honorable David Cicilline
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Antitrust,
Commercial, and Administrative Law
6240 O'Neill House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Buck
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Antitrust,
Commercial, and Administrative Law
2142 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cicilline and Ranking Member Buck:

On behalf of the undersigned journalism and media organizations, we applaud your leadership and the Subcommittee's ongoing efforts to scrutinize and address the anticompetitive practices of dominant technology platforms and their harm to journalism. Our organizations' missions share a strong commitment to the advancement of diversity across all forms of journalism and the media. However, we recognize a simple fact: for there to be advancement of diversity in journalism, journalism itself must survive and thrive.

Unfortunately, the anticompetitive practices of some of the largest digital platforms have distorted the marketplace for news and fact-based journalism while funneling profits for themselves. Algorithms that favor sensationalized or false information are used to generate traffic and clicks. Legitimate local news content is deprioritized, including coverage of topics as important as COVID-19. Take-it-or-leave-it terms and conditions for use, advertising and data practices all tilt the playing field to the financial benefit of a few platforms and at the expense of news content creators and consumers.

Recent events in Australia reflect the astonishing market power and stakes for this debate: faced with a not-yet-enacted proposal to negotiate with and fairly compensate news content creators, a dominant digital firm blocked all news content on its platform. The free press is a cornerstone of our nation's democracy and allows our society to speak truth to power. These democratic ideals must not be allowed to be ransomed by the financial interests of a few of the most powerful.

By addressing these maladies, through the bipartisan Journalism Competition and Preservation Act and other potential remedies, Congress can help ensure investment in fact-based journalism and a media ecosystem fortified by diverse voices, perspectives and service to all audiences.

Sincerely,

National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters
Native American Journalists Association
Radio Television Digital News Association