

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Joins bipartisan group of sens. calling for relief for rural broadcasters, local newspapers during coronavirus

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin joined a bipartisan group of 74 of her colleagues, led by Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV), Steve Daines (R-MT), Gary Peters (D-MI), John Barrasso (R-WY), and Chuck Schumer (D-NY), in calling for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Acting Director Russell Vought to support radio and television broadcasters and local newspapers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The Senators said in part,** *“Our radio and television broadcasters and rural newspapers provide local and national news, emergency alerts, educational programs, and more to all corners of the United States. In many rural areas, broadcast stations are the predominant or only form of local information. It is important that local media are able to continue to provide their services during the COVID-19 pandemic so that Americans are able to stay up to date with the latest news and information.”*

The full letter is available below and [here](#). An online version of this release is available [here](#).

Dear Mr. Vought,

We are writing today concerning the challenges faced by local media and actions the Office of Management and Budget can take that will help ensure these

important businesses are able to continue to operate throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our radio and television broadcasters and rural newspapers provide local and national news, emergency alerts, educational programs, and more to all corners of the United States. In many rural areas, broadcast stations are the predominant or only form of local information. It is important that local media are able to continue to provide their services during the COVID-19 pandemic so that Americans are able to stay up to date with the latest news and information.

Local newspapers and broadcasters have been particularly hit hard financially due to decreased revenue typically derived from advertising sales. This comes at a time when they have increased coverage of daily news, alerts and educational programs. As Congress and the administration continue to work to keep small businesses operating and employees on the payroll through the Paycheck Protection Program, we believe there is an opportunity for the federal government to provide relief to our local newspapers and broadcasters.

Many federal agencies maintain advertising accounts in order to provide public notices and information to Americans. For example, the Census Bureau receives funding to run advertisements regarding the 2020 Census. With the passage of new programs under the CARES Act and other COVID-19 related legislation, there is an opportunity for the federal government to disseminate essential information to Americans through local advertisements. Further, allowing for flexibility for state and local governments to use federal funds to publicize new programs and information to their residents would serve a vital, dual interest. Increasing local advertising will both help disseminate important information to communities and support local media with revenue that will help keep them operating. This action can be implemented today, without the need for additional federal appropriations from Congress.

We strongly believe that local newspapers and broadcasters play an integral role during the COVID-19 pandemic and making sure that stations are able to continue operating during this time is critical. We therefore encourage the Office of Management and Budget to work with federal agencies throughout the government to increase advertising in local newspapers and on broadcast stations in order to help ensure they are able to continue to operate throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

We thank you for your attention to this important issue and look forward to your response.