

Sen. Spreitzer, Rep. Brown: Introduce legislative package to support local journalism in Wisconsin

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MADISON – Today, State Senator Mark Spreitzer and Representative Brienne Brown introduced a package of three bills aimed at continuing the vital conversation around preserving and enhancing local journalism in Wisconsin. The legislation includes a bill to create a state tax credit for local newspaper subscriptions, a bill to establish a Civic Information Consortium to support local journalism and media projects across the state with grant funding, and a bill to create a journalism fellowship program within the Universities of Wisconsin for beginning journalists.

Local journalism is a pillar of our democracy, but the industry continues to face challenges. According to the [Medill School of Journalism's latest report on local news in the United States](#), nearly 40% of local newspapers have closed and more than 75% of newspaper jobs have been lost since 2005. Today, 50 million Americans live with limited or no access to local news, and over 1,500 counties across the country now rely on just a single remaining news source.

Senator Mark Spreitzer (D-Beloit)

“While more rural and suburban areas risk becoming news deserts, the need for robust, independent journalism is as urgent as ever. By bringing these proposals forward, we are reaffirming our commitment to the local newsrooms that are the lifeblood of our democracy. I am proud to partner with Rep. Brown and our other co-authors to ensure Wisconsinites can continue to be informed and engaged with local news.”

Representative Brienne Brown (D-Whitewater)

“As a former journalist, I saw this coming back in the dot-com bubble of the 90s – when media consolidation started pushing out the reporters who actually do the work. Now big corporations are buying out our local papers, replacing real coverage of city halls and county boards with recycled content and social media noise. This package is about reversing that trend. It supports local journalism that’s accountable, on the ground, and focused on getting the facts right.”