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Assemblywoman Rubio's AB 323, the Save Local Journalism Act, Passes Out of Senate Appropriations, Heads to Senate Floor

SACRAMENTO, CA. -- Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio (D- Baldwin Park) and Assemblyman Tim Grayson (D-Concord) today announced that Assembly Bill 323, the Save Local Journalism Act, has passed the Senate Appropriations Committee on a 7-0 vote.

AB 323 establishes a path for community and ethnic news outlets to reach underserved communities through state advertising and provides additional time for ethnic, mid-size and daily newspapers to comply with AB 5.

"Today, as fires rage across our state, our local news outlets are working 24/7 provide their communities with real-time information on risk. This is the work they do every single day," said Assemblywoman Rubio. "I'm gratified that my colleagues in the Senate recognize the critical importance of preserving community and ethnic newspapers and providing a lifeline to help them financially stabilize and adopt new delivery models."

"As neighbors and valued members of our communities, local journalists and news organizations are uniquely equipped to report quickly on the issues that matter most to their readers--something that has become even more crucial as we grapple with both a pandemic and raging wildfires throughout our state," said Assemblymember Tim Grayson (D-Concord), a principal co-author on the bill. "AB 323 will help keep local newspapers afloat and their reporting possible, and I'm thrilled that my colleagues in the Senate recognized that today."

Since the pandemic hit, California newspapers have experienced declines of about half their average advertising revenue, even as they lifted paywalls to provide all Californians access to

local information on outbreaks and health resources. Without a temporary extension of their exemption from AB 5, they face impending increased operational costs of up to 85%, putting many communities in jeopardy of becoming news-less.

Thirty-five members of the Legislature are coauthoring AB 323: Senators Allen, Bates, Caballero, Chang, Dodd, Galgiani, Glazer, Hertzberg, McGuire, Mitchell, Roth, Rubio and Umberg; and Assemblymembers Aguiar-Curry, Bauer-Kahan, Chu, Cooley, Cunningham, Diep, Flora, Frazier, Friedman, Gallagher, Grayson, Irwin, Kamlager, Kiley, Levine, Low, Mayes, Obernolte, O'Donnell, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, and R. Rivas.

Assemblywoman Rubio also pointed to the need for ethnic news outlets to inform communities of color during times of civil unrest. An [opinion-editorial](#) in today's Mercury News, bylined by Assemblymembers Rubio and Evan Low (D-Silicon Valley), notes that, "Our great democracy -- and our ability to improve it -- is predicated on an informed citizenry. We cannot allow our community newspapers to die when we need them the most -- in our pursuit of a more just, more inclusive America."

AB 323 now heads to the Senate Floor, where it is expected to be heard next week.

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