

Editorial

* Views expressed in columns are those of the writer only and do not represent the newspaper's opinion.

THEIR VIEW

The time to support local news is now

Congress has an opportunity to pass legislation that benefits all local citizens, businesses and even protects our democracy. The Local Journalism Sustainability Act, LJSA for short, should be included as part of any upcoming reconciliation bill that Congress is considering. The LJSA is a well-thought-out bill that would provide needed support to local news organizations, including local newspapers, to ensure their viability as they continue to make progress toward a digital future.

Many members of Congress have seen what happens when a newspaper closes in their district, and they see the impact it has on the community. That is why many of our leaders, including Senators Cantwell, Schumer, Manchin, Wyden and others have stepped up in support of the LJSA. And while others in Congress may not have signed on as co-sponsors of the bill yet, many recognize the importance and the need to maintain strong local news organizations in their communities.

To understand what the LJSA is, it is important to understand what it is not. This is a temporary measure to help newspapers at this critical time, and it sunsets after five years. The LJSA won't help national news organizations, but it will support local news organizations and help them invest in their newsrooms in order to continue to cover the issues that impact local cities and towns. The result is a bill that provides a bridge for local newspapers as they continue to evolve their business models.

So why is it so critical for Congress to pass the LJSA now? Quite simply, the future of local newspapers in many areas of the country hangs in the balance. In the past 15 years, more than a quarter of all newspapers have disappeared, and many more have been forced to make staff reductions that have diminished the coverage of topics that impact local citizens. The way people get their information and advertise their local businesses is quickly moving to digital, and local newspapers continue to be impacted by the Big Tech companies that use their original content without fair compensation. To make matters worse, newspapers, like many other industries, were financially impacted by the pandemic, even though the coverage provided by local newspapers was more vital than ever.

The current economic challenges have only hastened the need for Congress to act on the LJSA quickly. As inflation is impacting everyone, it has made the environment for local newspapers even more challenging. The cost of retaining employees has gone up. The cost of newsprint has increased 30% over last year, and the cost of gas used to deliver the newspaper is up more than 50% in the past two years. Many newspaper carriers drive hundreds and even thousands of miles each week. These increases have driven many local newspapers closer to making further reductions or even ceasing operations.

Who wins with the passage of the Local Journalism Sustainability Act? Clearly, local newspapers win by obtaining the support needed to continue their investments in reporting on local news. But the real winners are the communities that keep their local newspaper. From watching the actions of local government, reporting on the state of local schools, tracking local health trends or providing the latest restaurant reviews and sales information, local newspapers keep a community connected and informed.

We encourage everyone to reach out to their representatives in Congress and ask them to support local journalism. Whether it is inclusion of the LJSA in the budget reconciliation bill, or a stand-alone bill, the time for action is now. It's a rare opportunity for government to act on something that benefits us all.

America's Newspapers is the trade association for thousands of newspapers across the United States. www.newspapers.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Newberry Observer encourages and welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be about issues of general interest and no longer than 500 words. Letters that exceed 500 words will be shortened to conform to our policies.

We reserve the right to edit for grammar and spelling, but the meaning of the letter or column will not be altered. They should not be libelous or in bad taste. We will not publish anonymous letters. Letters thanking sponsors or endorsing candidates will be considered but publication can only be assured through advertising. Letters must be signed, include a street address, hometown and telephone number. The street address and telephone number will not be published. Verification of the writer's ID is required. Writers should limit their submissions to one letter every 30 days. Letters should be typed or printed legibly. Illegible letters will not be considered for publication.

Letters can be hand delivered to our office at 1716 Main St., mailed to The Newberry Observer, Letters to the Editor, 1716 Main St., Newberry, SC 29108 or emailed to NBOnews@cmpapers.com. We do not accept faxed letters.



THEIR VIEW

Newberry, you will be missed

It has been a good five years. Thank you to Newberry County and specifically the City of Newberry for being our home since 2017. Laura and I have settled into the community, bought a house, brought two amazing children into the world and learned a lot about small town (Southern) living.

It is with a bit of sentimentality I reflect on our time here, as we prepare to relocate to Omaha, Nebraska, which is much nearer to most of our family.

The community has been a great place to start a family, everyone has been welcoming and kind. I have joined social clubs and groups like Rotary, Lions and Newberry Young Professionals who have helped network and learn the area. I have also had the opportunity to serve on the board of impactful community organizations like The Living Hope Foundation and the Gallman School Project (Building Thriving Communities Foundation).

Through lucky timing, my time on those boards coincided with transformational works for both Living Hope and Gallman. The food pan-

try run by Living Hope was able to relocate to a centrally located building at 1830 Nance Street, from their out-of-town location at New Enoree Baptist Church. The Gallman Project, which had started out as an effort to save the historic Gallman High School from falling into disrepair, actually obtained the building from the School District of Newberry County and have begun work on funding the transition into a community center for the neighborhood and the county.

I was also honored to be selected as president-elect for the Rotary Club of Newberry, but unfortunately will not be able to serve in that role.

There are a number of other organizations and committees I have served with over my time in Newberry and listing them will surely omit a group that does honorable work. However, I was proud to help out with the Census 2020 group, various Newberry College programs (especially through my time at The Muller Center), City of Newberry events like Oktoberfest and Pork in the Park, The Prosperity

Business Association, and committees and such within those and other groups.

The close-knit nature of Newberry allowed Laura and me to make a bit of an outsized impact in our relatively short time here, and we appreciate every opportunity that was afforded to us.

There are far too many individuals who have watched out for us and helped guide our time in Newberry and they will be missed. Many of them we met in our first

couple months in town at EclipseFest in 2017.

To those who have employed me, specifically Champion Media (parent company of The Newberry Observer) and Newberry College (The Muller Center) thanks for taking a chance on a guy from the Midwest in South Carolina.

I started out in 2017 as an ad rep for The Observer, made headway in the community, but tried out something different for a year in 2019-20 by taking on the role of civic engagement coordinator at The Muller Center at Newberry College. The pandemic more or less shut down the position

at the college and I found my way back to The Observer as publisher.

The experience from these jobs has been invaluable and I again thank you.

As publisher, I have sold advertising, reported on city and town councils, covered business openings and closings, attended ribbon cuttings, met politicians and generally enjoyed the experience that was granted to me. Hopefully, I was able to show how important it is to maintain local news coverage and the necessary place of a local newspaper in a small-ish rural community.

At The Muller Center I was able to implement a volunteer time tracking app that shows the impact of Newberry College's student volunteers. The ambition of the students was motivating and showed what an asset Newberry College is to the community. I will miss the students I met there, as well.

I hope to re-visit The Center of the Universe for festivals or just to catch up, but know you all will be missed. My gratitude to Newberry is immense.

Andy Husk was the publisher of The Newberry Observer, reach him at 803-768-3117



Andy Husk
Publisher

THEIR VIEW

Not by feelings, but by faith

By Patsy Lambert
Contributing Columnist

Our feelings rise and fall with different circumstances. We know what it is like to be angry one hour and smiling the next. Emotions are part of our personality and are God given.

God's peace is not our feelings, but is anchored to His word. God's word

is eternal, an everlasting truth that can be counted on regardless of our emotions. Many times we may feel hopeless, but God's word says our hope is sure and certain and we may feel powerless but we have all the strength we need in Him.

"The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace."

Psalm 27:1. Sometimes we may feel lonely, but God's word says He is with us always. When we know God is in control, we have nothing to fear. We can give Him thanks in everything. Knowing He is arranging all things for our good. It's hard to be thankful in tough times, it's easy in the good times. But God says in all

things give thanks. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:20. Just remember salvation is not based on our feelings, but by faith.

Patsy Lambert is from Whitmire. Her columns appear weekly in The Newberry Observer.

