

1 [Supporting California State Assembly Bill No. 886 (Wicks) - California Journalism
2 Preservation Act]

3 **Resolution supporting California State Assembly Bill No. 886, the California Journalism**
4 **Preservation Act, authored by Assembly Member Buffy Wicks, requiring social media**
5 **companies to remit a journalism usage fee to each eligible digital news publisher,**
6 **equal to a percentage of the social media company’s advertising revenue, as a first**
7 **step in a larger advocacy and policy effort to level the playing field in a rapidly**
8 **changing media market that includes a diversity of community and ethnic local media**
9 **outlets, and ensure that journalists are fairly compensated for their work.**

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11 WHEREAS, A diverse, ethical and open local media industry, including community and
12 ethnic media, is necessary for democratic participation, for functional and accountable local
13 government, and for informed and engaged communities; and

14 WHEREAS, Daily access to factual journalism plays an essential role in California and
15 in the San Francisco Bay Area, with local news organizations providing the public with critical
16 information about their communities; and

17 WHEREAS, News content publishers should receive fair market value for their content
18 that is used by others on digital platforms, in an effort to ensure that smaller local news outlets
19 can help sustain the critical diversity of the industry as a whole; and

20 WHEREAS, Communities without local news outlets, including community and ethnic
21 journalism publications, lose touch with government, business, education, and neighbors, and
22 operate without journalists working to keep them informed on issues that impact their daily
23 lives, confirming factual information, exposing corruption, and reflecting and uplifting common
24 goals and shared experiences; and

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1 WHEREAS, Over the past ten years, newspaper advertising has decreased 66
2 percent, and newsroom staff have declined 44 percent; and

3 WHEREAS, Major U.S. newspapers and online investigative outlets have their shrunk
4 newsrooms, laying off hundreds of journalists and copy editors, and one in four local
5 newspapers that operated in 2005 no longer exist; and

6 WHEREAS, Social media platforms have used their market power to unfairly redirect the
7 flow of advertising money away from credible news organization and insufficiently
8 compensated them for their content, leading to serious impacts to news outlets' financial
9 sustainability, as well as their ability to maintain or recruit staff; and

10 WHEREAS, Especially hard-hit have been ethnic media outlets, which have long been
11 a distinctive genre of journalism and community communications that inform, engage, and
12 advocate on behalf of communities underserved by both the for-profit and not-for-profit
13 general market media; and

14 WHEREAS, Ethnic, grassroots, and in-language media plays a unique role in
15 upholding the fourth estate in our democracy by facilitating cross-racial and cross-ethnic
16 culturally competent communications which facilitate social integration, promote civic
17 engagement, and address inequities across underserved communities; and

18 WHEREAS, San Francisco is home to numerous ethnic and local community news
19 outlets that span a wide range of diverse neighborhoods and communities; and

20 WHEREAS, San Francisco's ethnic and community journalism outlets broadly reflect
21 the City's cultural diversity, including outlets focused on specific neighborhoods, immigrant
22 communities, native languages, religions, sexual orientation, races, genders, bodily abilities,
23 and professions; and

24 WHEREAS, Given the important role of ethnic media, it is critical to advance policy that
25 ensures their publishers are justly compensated for the content they create and distribute; and

1 WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 886 (AB 886) (Wicks) would require covered social media
2 platforms to remit a journalist usage fee to eligible digital journalism providers equal to a
3 percentage of the covered platforms' advertising revenue according to the providers'
4 allocation share, and would empower local news organizations to assert their rights to fair
5 compensation; and

6 WHEREAS, On April 16, 2024, multi-billion dollar corporate conglomerate, Google
7 LLC, announced it would begin pulling California news links from its search engine in
8 retaliation for and response to AB 886's proposal to require it to pay for linking to news
9 content on its platform; and

10 WHEREAS, Intentionally eliminating access to vital and credible information to a
11 population increasingly reliant on digital news sources, in particular and most concerning
12 shutting off voters' access to news in the middle of a critically important election cycle, is a
13 brazen and destructive act that undermines one of the founding principles of American
14 democracy and will result in the disenfranchisement of voters; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
16 supports Assembly Bill 886 (Wicks), the California Journalism Preservation Act, which
17 requires social media companies to remit a journalism usage fee to each eligible digital news
18 publisher, equal to a percentage of the social media company's advertising revenue, as a
19 mechanism to ensure that local, grassroots and ethnic journalism is fairly compensated,
20 thereby strengthening our local democracy through an informed electorate; and, be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors opposes attempts by Google
22 LLC to threaten lawmakers, undermine a fair and democratic press, and disenfranchise voters
23 and journalists who deserve to be compensated for their content; and, be it

24 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges San Francisco's State
25 Legislative delegation to support AB 886, and the California State Legislature to pass it, and

1 Governor Gavin Newsom to sign AB 886 into law, as a first step in a larger advocacy and
2 policy effort to level the playing field in a rapidly changing media market that includes a
3 diversity of community and ethnic local media outlets, and ensure that journalists are fairly
4 compensated for their work; and, be it

5 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors directs the Clerk of the Board
6 to send a copy of this Resolution upon final passage to the offices of San Francisco's State
7 Legislative delegation, Assembly Member Wicks, the City Lobbyist, and the Governor's Office.

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