

Proposed resolution for the City of Saskatoon (Updated Jan. 30, 2022)

Purpose: To strengthen democracy by
supporting local journalism

Submitted by Mirko Petricevic on behalf of
ink-stainedwretches.org

Whereas a healthy, professional news media is essential for the proper functioning of
civil society and democracy at the local, regional, federal and international levels;

Whereas the Public Policy Forum declares — on its website for the 2017 report *The Shattered Mirror: News, Democracy and Trust in the Digital Age* (commissioned by the federal government) — that “real news is in crisis” in this country;

Whereas the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) cited eight “critical information needs” the media help to provide including emergencies; other public risks to health; education; the environment; economic opportunities; civic and political knowledge of policy initiatives; and the conduct of public officials, and candidates for office (*The Shattered Mirror* p.4);

Whereas Canadians have lost the essential services provided by roughly 3,000 media workers across Canada due to temporary and permanent layoffs from the time the COVID-19 pandemic began — a time it became clearer to the public how important it is for Canadians to receive accurate information — and advertising

revenues have plunged, prompting an **emergency** \$30-million advertising-buy by the federal government;

Whereas residents of 190 Canadian communities **lost 250 established news outlets** due to closings or mergers between 2008 and 2018;

Whereas two thirds of Canadians agree or somewhat agree that because of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 outbreak the federal government should treat widespread media bankruptcies and layoffs as an emergency, according to a **Nanos Research poll** of April 2020;

Whereas the federal government allocated nearly \$600 million in **aid for Canadian media** over five years in its 2019 budget, including a 25-per-cent tax credit for newsroom salaries; a 15-per-cent tax credit for digital media subscribers; and charitable tax status for non-profit news outlets;

Whereas Canada's federal government acknowledged in its **2019 budget** (p. 173) that "A strong and independent news media is crucial to a well-functioning democracy.";

Whereas at least 28 municipal councils in nine provinces have **already passed** resolutions similar to the one proposed below;

Whereas the news media in the Saskatoon area have been instrumental during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring local citizens have accurate local information;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Saskatoon council recognizes that a healthy, professional news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in our city; urges nearby municipal councils and across Canada to recognize that a robust news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in their jurisdictions; endorses legislation and regulations to support and rejuvenate news outlets across Canada; and urges the federal government to move quickly to pass legislation to ensure an ecosystem for a healthy news media to serve all Canadians.

And that the resolution be forwarded to the area municipalities, local MPs, MLAs, the Municipalities of Saskatchewan, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.