

Other Views

Congress eyes ways to support local news

In the past five months, Congress has responded to the coronavirus public health crisis with several emergency relief measures, including the stimulus checks sent to individuals and households, payroll protections to small businesses, expanded unemployment payments, fee waivers for borrowing against 401(k) plans and more.



DEAN RIDINGS
AMERICA'S NEWSPAPERS

Now, Congress will get the opportunity to pass a relief measure that

protects your access to trustworthy local news, helps grow local businesses through ads placed in local news media and rewards you for subscribing to a newspaper like this one.

The Local Journalism Sustainability Act, introduced July 16, is a bipartisan bill that provides for tax credits for subscribing to a local newspaper, payroll credit for paying journalists who provide local news and credit for advertising in local newspapers and local media.

This act responds to the insidious way the pandemic has deeply damaged American communities in a malevolent cycle. It forced the shuttering of many local businesses that stopped advertising in their local paper. Newspapers, which have seen their revenues plummet, responded by laying off the people who bring the news or dropping the days they publish. That threatens the access to vital news by people in the community who themselves may be out of a job temporarily or permanently and can no longer afford newspaper subscriptions.

Here's how the Local Journalism Sustainability Act would help everyone caught in this vicious circle:

- Credit for advertising in local newspapers and local media. Businesses with fewer than 1,000 employees would be eligible for a five-year nonrefundable tax credit to spend on advertising in local newspapers or local radio or television stations. The credit, up to \$5,000 in the first year and \$2,500 in each of the next four years, would cover 80% of advertising costs in the first year and 50% annually thereafter.
- Credit for local newspaper subscriptions. The act provides for a nonrefundable tax credit of up to \$250 per year to help cover the costs of subscriptions to local newspapers, in print or digital form, that primarily produce content related to news and current events. The credit would cover 80% of subscription costs in the first year, and 50% thereafter.
- Payroll credit for journalists. This five-year refundable tax credit could be used by local newspapers on compensation of its journalists up to \$50,000 a year. The credit would cover 50% of compensation, up to \$50,000, in the first year and 30% of compensation, up to \$50,000, in each of the subsequent four years.

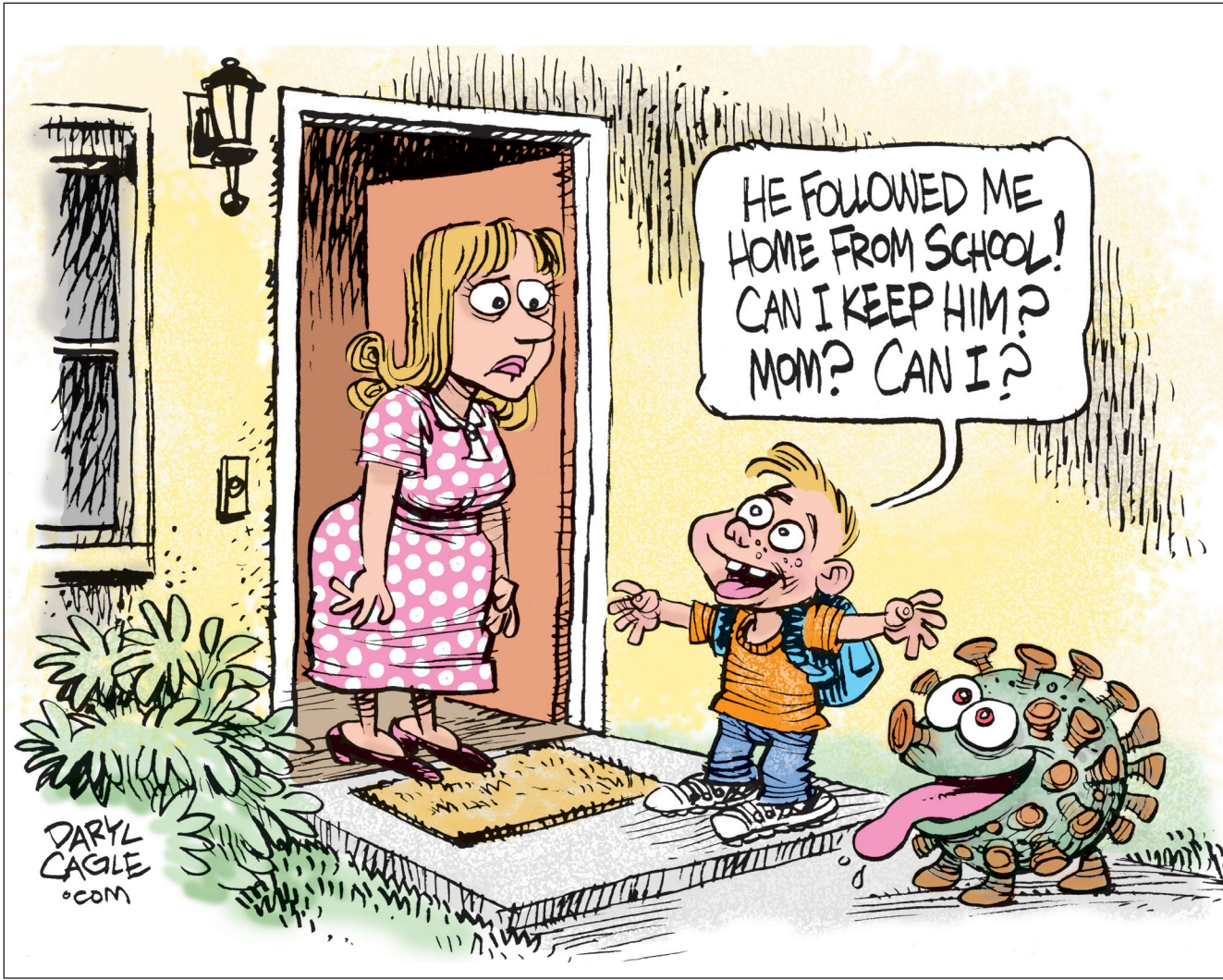
This simple yet comprehensive legislation helps the three keys to trustworthy, fair and accurate local journalism: citizens, business owners and journalists. T

his is an urgently needed assist with a strictly limited time frame responding to an unprecedented public health and economic crisis.

Please contact the office of your local U.S. representative to ask them to support your local businesses, your local news media and your access to the trustworthy local news that only your community newspaper provides by co-sponsoring the Local Journalism Sustainability Act.

To see how to contact these legislators by email, phone or mail, just go to www.usa.gov/elected-officials.

About the Author
Dean Ridings is CEO of America's Newspapers, an alliance of local newspapers and related establishments committed to explaining, defending and advancing the vital role of newspapers in democracy and civil life.



My Voice

Kids need to go back to school

I wake up. Uhh. Another day of distance learning.

This has been annoying. You might not believe that, but maybe I can convince you that it is. Let me tell you my routine. Wake up. Go to my meeting. This lasted TWO HOURS. Now it's ten o'clock. Do math, I need



CARSON YANCEY
SUMMERVILLE

to ask Mom about a question. Mom is helping someone else. Do the rest of my math. Mom is still helping someone else. Walk a mile down the hill to the bus and the other mile up the hill to get our lunch from the school (okay that wasn't so bad). Research something and do a flip-grid on it (that wasn't bad either). Do spelling. Get interrupted. Do language, get distracted and scolded to get on task. Mark everything off my list. Yay — but it's 5 o'clock. Do chores, go to bed. (Yes, I ate dinner.) Wake up and do this all over again.

Now that I have hopefully got you wanting to read my article, let me tell you what I think: Kids should go to school like they used to.

My first main point is that online schooling is annoying to students.

Students get to see their friends but can't talk to them; it is basically torture. Like if you are working outside in the middle of the day, the sun is baking you alive, and a few yards away is your aboveground pool that you can't get in because you have to dig this deep hole for something silly that you can't even remember. And teachers can't give proper lessons. There are so many distractions when trying to do your work and in meetings siblings are interrupting you, watching a show, or just making noise. There are many distractions outside as well as inside. Also people don't have unlimited devices. There are four kids in my family. So we need four devices for us to work on. One more thing is that people with special needs can't get the help they need.

My second main point is that parents can't always help their kids. Sometimes they are busy on a phone call or doing chores.

Parents also need their devices, so if a parent needs to work on their phone and a kid does also, then that is a problem. A parent might have a kid who needs special education and could not help them. There is one really bad thing that could happen. Someone's mom or dad might have to quit work to help their child and then no one could get money in that

family.
My third main point is what happens if the electricity or internet stops working? I'll tell you, computers need electricity and the internet; without that we could not do meetings or online work. There is one exception. If the internet is down or the electricity is out, you could work on a phone if it has data. There are two problems with this. One: If the electricity went out, phones could only work for a little bit because phones would need to charge. Two: Phones have tiny screens; even the iPhone 11 doesn't have a good enough screen to do school work on.

My final main point is the coronavirus does not affect younger people as much as older people. Studies show that very few kids have died from the coronavirus. So I think we should go to school because it will improve kids' emotional state as well as help them with the coronavirus. Kids can get the coronavirus, not die from it.

Please find a reasonable way to reopen schools in the fall. Thank you for listening.

About the Author
Carson Yancey is a student at Imbler Elementary School. He lives in Summerville and will be in the sixth grade in the fall.

CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

President Donald Trump: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1414; fax 202-456-2461; to send comments, go to www.whitehouse.gov/contact.
U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley: D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-3753; fax 202-228-3997. Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Pendleton office: 310 S.E. Second St. Suite 105, Pendleton 97801; 541-278-1129; merkley.senate.gov.
U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden: D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691; fax, 541-963-0885; wyden.senate.gov.
U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (2nd District): D.C. office: 2182 Rayburn Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515, 202-225-6730;

fax 202-225-5774. La Grande office: 1211 Washington Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-624-2400, fax, 541-624-2402; walden.house.gov.
Oregon Gov. Kate Brown: 254 State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310; 503-378-3111; www.governor.oregon.gov.
Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read: oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us; 350 Winter St. NE, Suite 100, Salem OR 97301-3896; 503-378-4000.
Oregon Attorney General Ellen F. Rosenblum: Justice Building, Salem, OR 97301-4096; 503-378-4400.
State Sen. William S. Hansell (29th District/Athena): Salem office: 900 Court St. NE., S-423, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1729. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/hansell. Email: sen.billhansell@oregonlegislature.gov.
State Rep. Greg Barreto (58th District/ Cove): Salem office: 900 Court St. NE., H-384, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1458. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov.

rep.gregbarreto@oregonlegislature.gov.
State Rep. Greg Smith (57th District): Salem office: 900 Court St. NE., H-482, Salem, OR, 97301; 503-986-1457. Heppner office: P.O. Box 219, Heppner, OR 97836; 541-676-5154; Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/smithg. Email: rep.gregsmith@oregonlegislature.gov.
Oregon Legislature: Legislative documents and information are available online at www.leg.state.or.us.
City of La Grande: Mayor Steve Clements, City Manager Robert Strope; P.O. Box 670, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-1309; fax 541-963-3333.
Union County Commissioners: Donna Beverage, Matt Scarfo and Paul Anderes; 1106 K Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-963-1001; fax 541-963-1079.
Wallowa County Commissioners: John Hillock, Todd Nash and Susan Roberts; 101 S. River St., Room 202, Enterprise, OR 97828; 541-426-4543, ext. 11.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE
NEWSSTAND PRICE: \$1.50
You can save up to 34% off the single-copy price with home delivery.
Call 541-963-3161 to subscribe.

Subscription rates per month:
Union & Wallowa Co.\$11.80
By mail, all other U.S.\$15

THE OBSERVER

An independent newspaper founded in 1896

(USPS 299-260)

Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, Oregon 97801. Published Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays (except Dec. 25) by EO Media Group, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850 (USPS 299-260)

COPYRIGHT © 2020 THE OBSERVER
The Observer retains ownership and copyright protection of all staff-prepared news copy, advertising copy, photos and news or ad illustrations. They may not be reproduced without explicit prior approval.

Phone: 541-963-3161

Toll free (Oregon): 1-800-781-3214
Fax: 541-963-7804
Email: news@lagrandeobserver.com
Website: www.lagrandeobserver.com
Street address: 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to: The Observer, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850
Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, Oregon 97801

STAFF				
Regional Publisher		Karrine Brogotti	Classifieds	Devi Mathson
Regional circulation director		Kelli Craft	Home delivery advisor	Amanda Fredrick
Editor		Phil Wright	Advertising representative	Juli Bloodgood
News clerk		Lisa Lester Kelly	Advertising representative	Amy Horn
Sports editor		Ronald Bond	Graphic design supervisor	Dorothy Kautz
Reporter		Dick Mason		
Reporter		Sabrina Thompson		

