

**New Jersey State League of Municipalities Conference Resolution No. 2017-10**

**Calling on the Legislature to Permit On-line News Platforms to Qualify As  
Legal Newspapers for the Purpose of Municipalities Publishing Legal Notices**

**Approved at the League Business Meeting, November 16, 2016  
Approved by Resolution Committee, November 14, 2017**

**WHEREAS**, various statutes require municipalities to publish legal notices in an official newspaper for numerous governmental actions such as meeting notices, ordinances, resolutions, municipal land use actions, or public bidding; and

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 35:1-2 requires that in order for a newspaper to qualify as a legal newspaper for the publication of official advertisements it must be printed and published in the English language within the state at least once a week for at least one year continuously; and

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 35:1-2.2 establishes the following qualifications for newspapers publishing official notices: newspapers must be printed entirely in the English language, be printed and published within the State, have a general paid circulation in the municipality where their publication office is situated for not less than two years and have been entered for two years as second class mail under US postal laws and regulations; and

**WHEREAS**, as technology has advanced, news publication has changed from voluminous newsprint to greater on-line reporting with fewer print pages; and

**WHEREAS**, this change has impacted municipalities, ranging from difficulties in having public notices printed, even though meeting print newspapers' deadlines, to fewer reporters covering local meetings and community events; and

**WHEREAS**, to fill the void, online news platforms have evolved to become the local source of news for many municipalities, however, they do not meet the statutory definition of legal newspapers and are unable to publish official notices; and

**WHEREAS**, at the same time a recent PEW Research Center survey on the news habits and attitudes of U.S. adults ages 18 and older, conducted in association with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, found that 81% get some of their news through websites, apps, or social media, in fact, about four in ten often get their news online;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, in conference assembled; urges the State legislature to amend the various statutes to permit municipalities to use qualified on-line news platforms to publish official notices; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that** a copy of this Resolution is forwarded to the members of the New Jersey General Assembly, the New Jersey State Senate, the Lieutenant Governor, Lieutenant Governor-elect, the Governor and the Governor-elect of the State of New Jersey.

**Sponsor:**

The Hon. Colleen Mahr,  
Mayor, Fanwood  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, NJLM

**Co-Sponsor:**

The Hon. Joseph Tempesta, Jr.  
Mayor, West Caldwell