

HOUSE No. 181

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Lori A. Ehrlich and Brendan P. Crighton

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act establishing a commission to study journalism in underserved communities.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Lori A. Ehrlich</i>	<i>8th Essex</i>
<i>Brendan P. Crighton</i>	<i>Third Essex</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>
<i>José F. Tosado</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>
<i>Andres X. Vargas</i>	<i>3rd Essex</i>

HOUSE No. 181

By Representative Ehrlich of Marblehead and Senator Crighton, a joint petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 181) of Lori A. Ehrlich and others for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to local journalism in underserved communities. Community Development and Small Businesses.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act establishing a commission to study journalism in underserved communities.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Resolved, that a special legislative commission, pursuant to section 2A of
2 chapter 4 of the General Laws is hereby established to: (i) conduct a comprehensive, non-binding
3 study relative to communities underserved by local journalism in Massachusetts; (ii) review all
4 aspects of local journalism including, but not limited to, the adequacy of press coverage of cities
5 and towns, ratio of residents to media outlets, the history of local news in Massachusetts, print
6 and digital business models for media outlets, the impact of social media on local news,
7 strategies to improve local news access, public policy solutions to improve the sustainability of
8 local press business models and private and nonprofit solutions, and identifying career pathways
9 and existing or potential professional development opportunities for aspiring journalists in
10 Massachusetts.

11 SECTION 2. The commission shall consist of the following 17 members: 2 of whom
12 shall be the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on community development and small

13 business; 1 member of the house of representatives, to be appointed by the speaker of the house;
14 1 member of the senate, to be appointed by the president of the senate; 2 of whom shall be
15 appointed by the governor; 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Shorenstein Center on
16 Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University; 1 of whom shall be a professor at
17 Northeastern School of Journalism; 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Schuster Institute
18 of Journalism at Brandeis University; 1 of whom shall be a member of the Boston Association of
19 Black Journalists; 1 of whom shall be a member of the National Association of Hispanic
20 Journalists; 1 of whom shall be a member of the Asian American Journalists Association of New
21 England; 1 of whom shall be an editor at Commonwealth Magazine; 1 of whom shall be a
22 member of the New England Newspaper and Press Association; 1 of whom shall be a member of
23 the Massachusetts Municipal Association; 1 of whom shall be a member of the Ida B. Wells
24 Society and 1 of whom shall be the director of the Journalism Lab at the Nieman Foundation at
25 Harvard University. All appointments shall be made no later than 30 days following the effective
26 date of this resolve.

27 SECTION 3. The commission shall meet a minimum of 5 times to review, study and
28 analyze existing literature as well as quantitative and qualitative data on the status of journalism
29 in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

30 SECTION 4. The commission shall submit its findings, along with recommendations for
31 legislation, to the governor, the speaker of the house, the president of the senate, and the clerks
32 of the house of representatives and the senate no later than 1 year after the effective date of this
33 resolve.

34 SECTION 5. The special commission may make such interim reports as it considers
35 appropriate.