

Chapter 688

(House Bill 594)

AN ACT concerning

Legal Advertisement or Legal Notice in Dorchester County – Publication in Newspaper or Newspaper in General Circulation – Digital Newspapers

FOR the purpose of ~~altering the meaning of “newspaper” or “newspaper in general circulation” when referring to the publication of a certain legal advertisement or legal notice to include certain publications that are offered in a print format or a digital format under certain circumstances;~~ establishing certain requirements for the publication of certain notices in Dorchester County; and generally relating to the publication of legal advertisements and legal notices in Dorchester County.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
 Article – General Provisions
 Section 1–113
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – General Provisions

1–113.

(a) Unless otherwise provided, in a law, resolution, or court order, judgment, or decree that refers to publishing a legal advertisement or legal notice, words such as “newspaper” or “newspaper in general circulation” mean a publication ~~THAT IS OFFERED EITHER IN A PRINT FORMAT OR A DIGITAL FORMAT~~ that:

(1) ~~has~~ has at least four pages;

(2) ~~habitually~~ habitually contains news items, reports of current events, editorial comments, advertising matter, and other miscellaneous information that is of public interest and is found generally in an ordinary newspaper;

(3) ~~has~~ ~~been published and distributed~~ ~~THROUGH THE PRINT OR DIGITAL FORMAT~~, by sale, from an established place of business at least once a week for 6 months or more before publication of the advertisement or notice;

(4) ~~has~~ has general circulation throughout the community where the publication is published; and

~~[(5)] (4) IF OFFERED IN A PRINT FORMAT:~~

~~(1) HAS AT LEAST FOUR PAGES; AND~~

~~(H) (5)~~ qualifies for Periodicals rates for mailing through the United States Postal Service.

(b) Subject to subsection (a) of this section and for purposes of the public general laws of the State, in Prince George’s County, “newspaper in general circulation” includes a newspaper that:

(1) is designated by the County Council as a newspaper of record; or

(2) (i) qualifies under subsection (a) of this section with respect to Prince George’s County; and

(ii) is published by a small business as defined in § 14–201 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

(C) SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION AND FOR PURPOSES OF THE PUBLIC GENERAL LAWS OF THE STATE, IN DORCHESTER COUNTY, IF A LAW, RESOLUTION, OR COURT ORDER, JUDGMENT, OR DECREE REQUIRES THE COUNTY TO PUBLISH A LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE:

(1) ANY REQUIRED ADVERTISEMENT OR NOTICE SHALL BE PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED THROUGH PRINT AND DIGITAL FORMAT;

(2) THE TIME PERIOD REQUIRED FOR PUBLICATION STARTS ONCE THE FIRST ADVERTISEMENT OR NOTICE APPEARS IN PRINT OR DIGITAL FORMAT; AND

(3) IF THERE IS NO PRINT AND DIGITAL PUBLICATION THAT MEETS ALL OF THE QUALIFICATIONS UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION, THE ADVERTISEMENT OR NOTICE MAY BE PLACED IN ANY DIGITAL PUBLICATION THAT CAN BE ACCESSED IN DORCHESTER COUNTY AND THAT REGULARLY CONTAINS LOCAL NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR DORCHESTER COUNTY.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, May 9, 2024.