



# RESOLUTIONS for 2024

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# **RESOLUTION I**

## **Improve Access to Government**

**WHEREAS**, we believe strongly that all Pennsylvanians have the right to full and open access to their government, its documents and its proceedings; and

**WHEREAS**, the state laws governing such access must continue to be monitored and improved; and

**WHEREAS**, the existing rights of access to meetings, records and judicial proceedings continue to be routinely violated.

**WE RESOLVE, THEREFORE**, to continue our commitment to improving access to our government, including access to state and local government agency meetings, public records and judicial proceedings, to increase our grassroots and educational efforts, and to affirm our intention to participate fully in any and all efforts to improve legislation to that effect.

## **RESOLUTION II**

### **Promote and Defend Newspaper Publication of Public Notices**

**WHEREAS**, public notices are an integral part of the content of every newspaper of general circulation, and citizens are accustomed to finding public notices collected in their local newspapers; and

**WHEREAS**, Courts, administrative agencies, the business community and the general public recognize newspapers as the authoritative source and archive of public notices; and

**WHEREAS**, state and local governments in Pennsylvania and elsewhere are attempting to replace newspaper public notices with digital announcements on a profusion of government sites; and

**WHEREAS**, a public notice advertisement published in an advertising circular, shopper, or on a government website would not have the same significance, impact and value as a newspaper public notice advertisement has; and

**WHEREAS**, despite the fact that Pennsylvania's newspapers publish public notices on their own sites and on the [www.publicnoticepa.com](http://www.publicnoticepa.com) site, there are millions of Pennsylvanians who depend upon their local newspapers for public notice information and millions who do not have access to the internet; and

**WHEREAS**, the enactment of legislation to curtail or eliminate newspaper public notices and administrative actions that do the same would be detrimental to the interests of all citizens and their communities.

**WE RESOLVE, THEREFORE**, to reaffirm that newspaper public notices are an essential component of Pennsylvania's system of representative self-government of, by and for an informed and alert citizenry; and

**FURTHER, WE RESOLVE** to oppose any legislative or administrative measure that would replace newspaper public notices with announcements posted on government sites or in shoppers; to draw attention to the public notices within our newspapers, electronic editions and newspaper websites; to educate readers, administrative officials and legislators about the significance of newspaper public notice advertising; and to participate in efforts, such as [www.publicnoticepa.com](http://www.publicnoticepa.com), to preserve the publication of public notices by newspapers.

# **RESOLUTION III**

## **Remain Vigilant Defenders of a Free and Open Government in the Face of Increasing Attempts to Elevate Privacy and Identity Theft Concerns Over First Amendment Rights**

**WHEREAS**, national security, cybersecurity threats, and a push for secrecy by some law enforcement organizations, have led to increasing limits on access to government, requiring an examination of the appropriate balance between individual privacy concerns, the role of government in shielding information from public view, and the public's right to know.

**WHEREAS**, in recent years, some well-publicized incidents have caused the public and the government to raise concerns about identity theft and the sharing of personally sensitive information in public and other records; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the need for security and the protection of certain sensitive information, and that there are legitimate concerns regarding individual privacy; and

**WHEREAS**, we also recognize that our industry is like few others, as it is based on fundamental democratic principles: That information should flow freely from and about the government, that informed citizens make good citizens, and that the strength of our nation is only as strong as the weakest of our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, we continue to recognize and affirm the principle expressed by Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, that "sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants;" and

**WHEREAS**, in each case where privacy concerns are at issue, there must also be a recognition and examination of the interests in and benefits of transparency; and

**WHEREAS**, Pennsylvania's print and digital news media companies have always acted as a watchdog of government and the current climate cannot suppress our zealous undertaking of this role.

**WE RESOLVE, THEREFORE**, that we must remain vigilant defenders of a free and open government and must protect our constitutionally recognized function of informing the public about government activities, as we continue to confront increasing attempts to restrict the press and elevate individual privacy rights over First Amendment rights of free speech and the need for government transparency.

**RESOLUTION IV**  
**Continue to Build Coalitions**  
**With Other Organizations That Share Our Values**

**WHEREAS**, in order to be effective in advancing our position on many issues, including improving openness to public agencies and the courts, we recognize the importance of developing and advancing coalitions; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize that we must unite with a number of different organizations and interest groups to be effective in educating the public and to be heard by the three branches of government.

**WE RESOLVE, THEREFORE**, to create and advance relationships with organizations that support our initiatives, so that we can encourage awareness and promote our goals as an industry.

# **RESOLUTION V**

## **Renew Our Commitment to Quality Advertising Practices**

**WHEREAS**, we recognize that print and digital news media advertising is regulated by a complex mix of federal and state laws; and

**WHEREAS**, we also recognize that advertising is a service to our readers and a source of revenue for our businesses, but that it also has an impact on the community.

**WE RESOLVE, THEREFORE**, to renew our commitment to quality advertising practices, including adherence to federal and state anti-discrimination laws, consumer protection laws, and the exercise of care in attaining the highest achievable standards of decency that will enhance our reputations as responsible members of our communities.

## **RESOLUTION VI**

### **Renew Our Commitment to Developing a Diversified Workforce and Readership**

**WHEREAS**, we have historically committed ourselves to develop a diversified workforce and to reflect the diversity of our communities in our coverage.

**WE RESOLVE, THEREFORE**, to renew our commitment to developing a diversified workforce and to expanding our coverage to reflect the racial, gender, ethnic, sexual orientation, socioeconomic and age diversity of our readers.

## **RESOLUTION VII**

### **Promote Pennsylvania Print and Digital News Media Organizations**

**WHEREAS**, we recognize that the news media industry is evolving as a result of changes in the world we live in, including the proliferation of new digital communications technologies and the ever-growing options of media channels available to today's consumers and advertisers; and

**WHEREAS**, the general public, advertisers and even some inside the industry may have incorrect perceptions about the strength and vitality of today's newspapers and news media organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, we believe Pennsylvania newspapers have the strongest print readership in the country, have more readers, in print and online, than any time in history, remain critical to shopping and purchasing decisions of consumers, and achieve results for advertisers that far surpass other media;

**WE RESOLVE, THEREFORE**, as an association, to promote the strengths of Pennsylvania's print and digital news media organizations, to share the positive facts about readership, advertising results, and news media business models, and to be vigilant in combating incorrect, negative perceptions about today's news media organizations; and

**WE FURTHER RESOLVE**, to focus our time and resources on innovation and growth, experimentation and evaluation of business models and revenue streams, and the collection and dissemination of best practices among news media organizations, to ensure the sustainability and future vitality of the news media industry in Pennsylvania; and

**WE FURTHER RESOLVE**, to assist Pennsylvania's print and digital news media organizations in their marketing and sales efforts, to help them grow their businesses and audiences, and to further strengthen their critical roles within their communities; and

**WE FURTHER RESOLVE**, to protect and maintain the central role of print and digital news media organizations in our democracy and in serving the public interest.



## **RESOLUTION VIII**

### **Advocate for Fair and Fact-Based Reporting**

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the thorough, truthful and complete reporting by our newspapers and news media organizations utilizing sources, tips, research and industry best practices, and

**WHEREAS**, Pennsylvania journalists follow a standard of ethics that is grounded in the concept that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy, and

**WHEREAS**, ethical journalism strives to ensure the free exchange of information that is accurate, fair and thorough. An ethical journalist acts with integrity, and

**WHEREAS**, certain individuals or groups label news stories with which they disagree as fulfilling an agenda of the newspaper or news media organization;

**WE RESOLVE, THEREFORE**, to advocate for fair and fact-based reporting by promoting our real news ad campaigns, highlighting the stellar reporting, photography and dedicated work of our newspapers and news media organizations through our ongoing Keystone Media Awards, and continuing conversations with elected officials about the importance of the reporting by our journalists for the local communities they serve.