

**Senator Maria Cantwell**

**Senate Floor Speech on Local Media and the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**April 20, 2020**

CANTWELL: Thank you, Mr. President. I am here this afternoon to speak about the critical aspect of the paycheck act as it relates to businesses, particularly in the newspaper and broadcasting business. It is so important to us to address this issue, because these are the people who are on the front line of delivering the information to us about this crisis. Unfortunately, in the past legislation, we did not include associations of broadcasters and newspapers under the definition. So up to several thousand newspapers and hundreds of local radio and televisions across the country are without existing programs by the small business affiliation rule to assist these companies in keeping important news print and news broadcasting staff at their jobs.

When I think about what I've learned about the coronavirus from these individuals, when I've learned about the broadcast information of nursing home problems, when I've learned about issues with Remdesivir, I all know that it came down to the local media who was telling us about it. So, when I think about the headlines I've seen—the LA Times, “Coronavirus is hastening collapse of local newspaper,” “Long-struggling newspapers on the brink brought by coronavirus”—I know that it is time for us to do something to help these individuals, and I hope that we can do that soon. We need the media—the local, small media—to help us continue to communicate. After all, the basis of a democracy is about truth and transparency, and they are helping to build a community of truth and transparency. We need to help them during this crisis. I yield the floor.