

## **Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary**

**Bill #:** H.2323

**Title:** An Act relative to access to local journalism

**Sponsor:** Rep. Alice Hanlon Peisch

**Committee:** Municipalities and Regional Government

**Hearing Date:**

**Prior History:** Similar to H.2098 (Part of Committee Redraft H.4787-House Third Reading)

**Current Law:** Chapter 4 Section 13 of MGL concerns the publications of legal notices by individuals, corporations, state agencies, state authorities, municipalities, political subdivisions, and other legal entities in newspapers and electronic publications.

- Subsection (b) lists the platforms where legal notices shall be published
- Subsection (c) outlines the requirements for legal notice publications on a newspaper's website or a statewide website.

**Summary:** Section 1 of this legislation amends the definition of the term community news website in subsection (b) of section 13 of chapter 4 of the General Laws by adding the following sentence-a website that has a newsletter subscription which serves at least fifteen per of the municipality's households.

Section 2 of this legislation further amends subsection (b) of section 13 of chapter 4 of the General Laws by authorizing a municipality and its public schools, their subdivisions, committees, boards, commissions or offices which are required by statute, ordinance, by-law or judicial order to publish a legal notice in a newspaper or newspaper of general circulation to meet such requirement through 1 or more of the following means:

- a print newspaper of local or general circulation
- the website of a print newspaper of local or general circulation
- a community news website that satisfies all criteria for digital publication as set forth in subsection (c)(i)-(iii) of said section 13 of chapter 4
- a statewide website that may be maintained as a repository for such notices

Section 3 states that nothing set forth in this legislation shall be construed to alter or amend the requirement that a municipality publish legal notices on its municipal website.

Section 4 holds that nothing set forth in this legislation shall be construed to alter or amend the time or timing of publication of legal notices set forth in the General Laws.

Section 5 states that this act shall take effect upon its passage.

**Notes:**

This language differs from H.2098 from the 2023-2024 legislative session by:

- offering a different modification to the term community news website
- providing municipalities and their subdivisions with more options as to how they shall publish their required legal notices
- adding a provision that holds that nothing in this act shall be construed to alter or amend the requirement that municipalities publish legal notices on their municipal website
- adding a provision that holds that nothing in this language shall be construed to alter or amend the timing of the publication of required legal notices set forth in the General Laws