

MAY 2013

APRIL 2018

# LOCAL NEWS AND THE PUBLIC GOOD:

The Story Behind Local Journalism's Decline,  
and Why it Matters to Civic Engagement and Democracy

Melissa Davis | Vice President, Gates Family Foundation  
Colorado Municipal League | June 23, 2021

**COLORADO  
MEDIA  
PROJECT**

FREE PRESS  
=  
Democracy

1st Amendment

learn what it  
means if you "love" it.

I ♥  
The  
NY  
TIMES

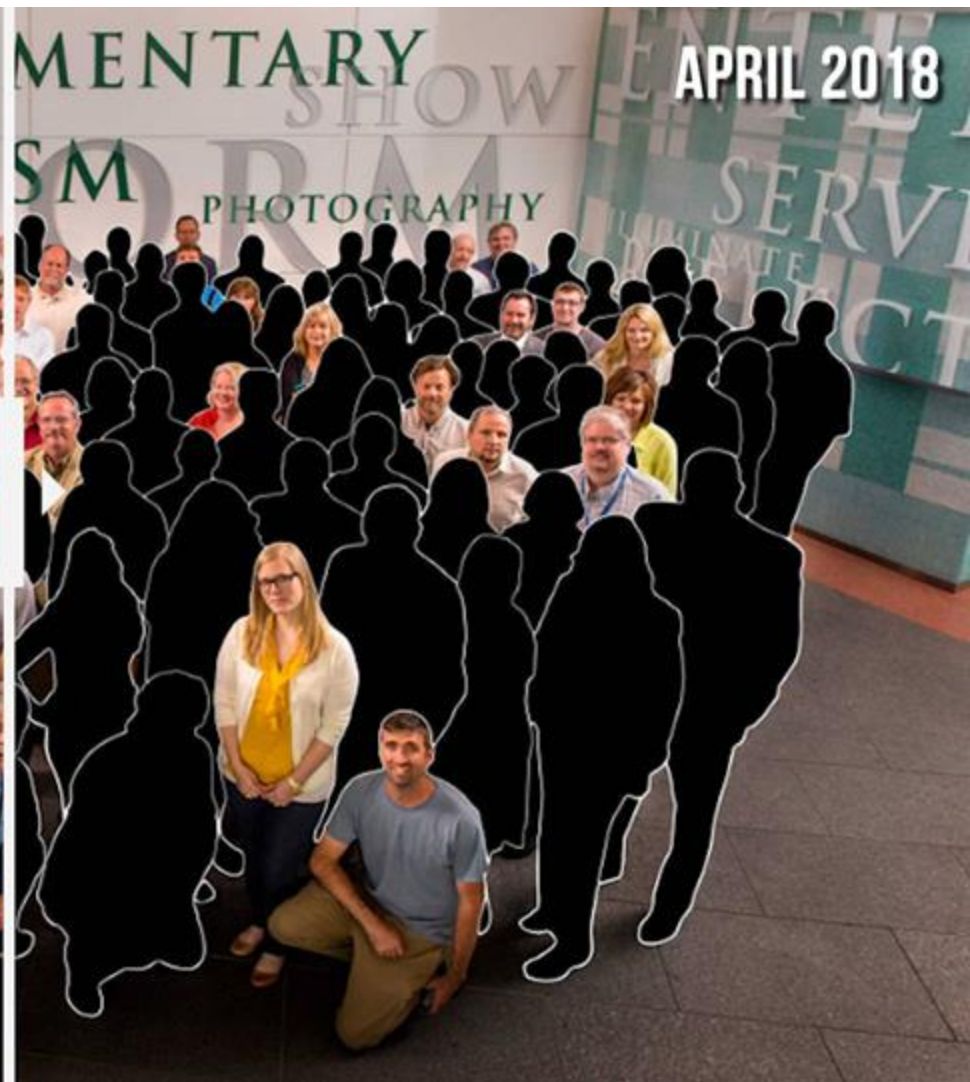
Facts  
Matter

OUT  
PENCE  
REBORN

CHILI DOG  
CHILI DOG



*“Consider this also a signal to our community and civic leaders that they ought to demand better.”*



**LETTERS** **KEEP THE EV TAX CREDIT**  
Electric vehicles need state subsidy

**PERSPECTIVE**

**INSIDE:** Teacher strikes may be more powerful now than ever before. —*Don Shalton, columnist, WA*

**matter**

# News matters

By The American Post Editorial Board

[illegible]

and the newspaper it is

[illegible]

By Gregory E. Mautz

**Who will step up and save The Denver Post?**  
By Gregory L. Moore

**P**eople constantly ask me how I feel about the drug wars and layoffs that have been wiping away at The Denver Post. Well, I'm sad! It's disconcerting. I left in March 2006 after 24 years as editor because I was losing my journalism. At the time, I referenced a small photograph hanging in our conference room that said that in the paper and in life no more kids in a wire mesh. Strength was enough. Naturally, I hoped my departure would slash the bleeding. I'm sad because it has continued, and I'm crying because I now realize the night air outside the window is much colder.

rich variety of news, opinion and information every day. I will stress it if it is good. We all will.

The *Journalism* also contends with its other host, as they always have. But there is just so much they can do with the dwindling resources they have. If the paper's *disaster* comes to pass, there will never be another *Journal*.

The question is whether we who care about quality journalism are happy.

The *Post* has been a part of progress in newspaper building.

**Journalism**  
**But the**

*Journalists don't protest.  
But this time is different.*

By Michaela Fuchs

Professional newspaper journalists aren't known for publicly expressing their opinions, so imagine my surprise back in June 2006 when my Denver Post colleagues asked me if I would join them in a protest.

My colleagues were planning to demonstrate against a New York hedge fund that was fleecing our respected Columbia institution, a Deutsche bankier that had served the public for more than a century.

Followed by editors, reporters, page designers and artists — normally known outside the newspaper for their unbiased public presence and stringent ethical standards — made T-shirts and picket signs, organized a state of squanders and one hell week's odious with whom

If this sounds like a scene out of a *Striptease* novel, you're not that far off. Employees of The Dancer Post were, in fact, producing their own

"We were protesting, Nixon-Glad at Capital, the Marthasburg lodge first business. The first and many other papers - including *Boydell's Daily Camera*, the *Longmont Times-Call* and concerned *American Indian* from last June, *Gladiolus* in *Boydell*, N.Y."

The present drive a lot of attention, especially towards the great utility of pictorial diagrams.



*Events that may  
fulfill service require-  
ments are being  
developed.*

Chuck Plunkett joined  
The Denver Post in 2003.  
*Denver Post file*

# Editorial page editor resigns

Chuck Plunkett  
called on owners  
of The Post to sell

Chuck Plunkett, the editorial page editor of The Denver Post, said Thursday

**John Wenzel**  @johnwenzel · Apr 6

The @denverpost is being murdered by its owners. It's the most heartbreaking, panic-inducing thing I've seen in 20-plus years of writing for daily newspapers. We need a new owner, or we are going to get shut down (and soon)  
dpo.st/2qdqbw @AldenExposed #AldenExposed



On May 15, 2015, The District Post's newsmen staff gathered for a photograph when winning the 2015 Pulitzer Prize. The photo shows the staff in a group, with some members holding the Pulitzer Prize trophy. The photo is a black and white photograph.



# Colorado's Journalism Workforce: A Decade of Decline

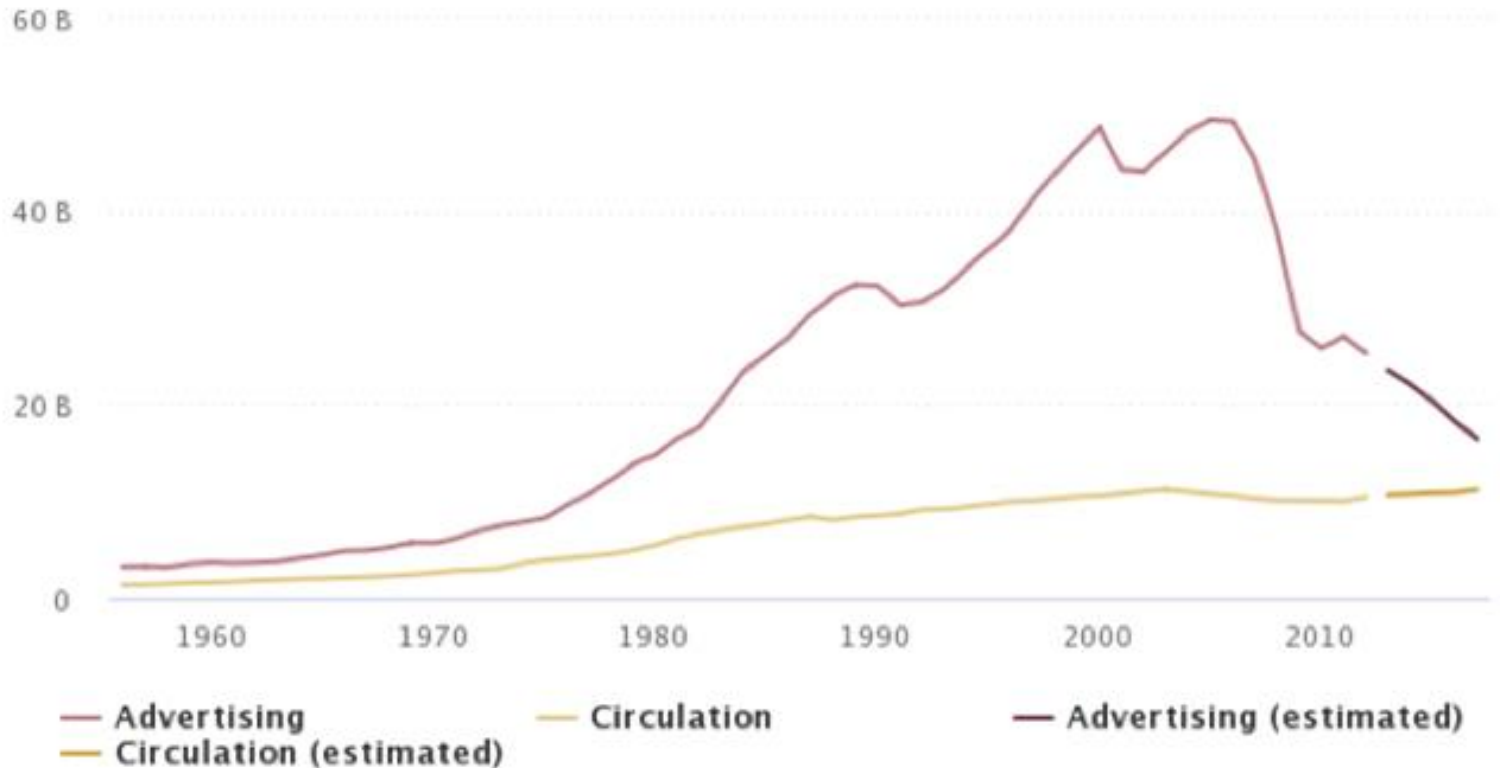
COLORADO'S JOURNALISM WORKFORCE: A DECADE OF DECLINE		
Year	Total Newspaper Employment	Reporters and Correspondents (all media)
2010	4,308	1,010
2018	2,535	570
2010-18 change	-1,773	-440
% change	-41%	-44%

*Source: Occupational Employment Statistics Program,  
Colorado Department of Labor and Employment*

# The news business in two charts

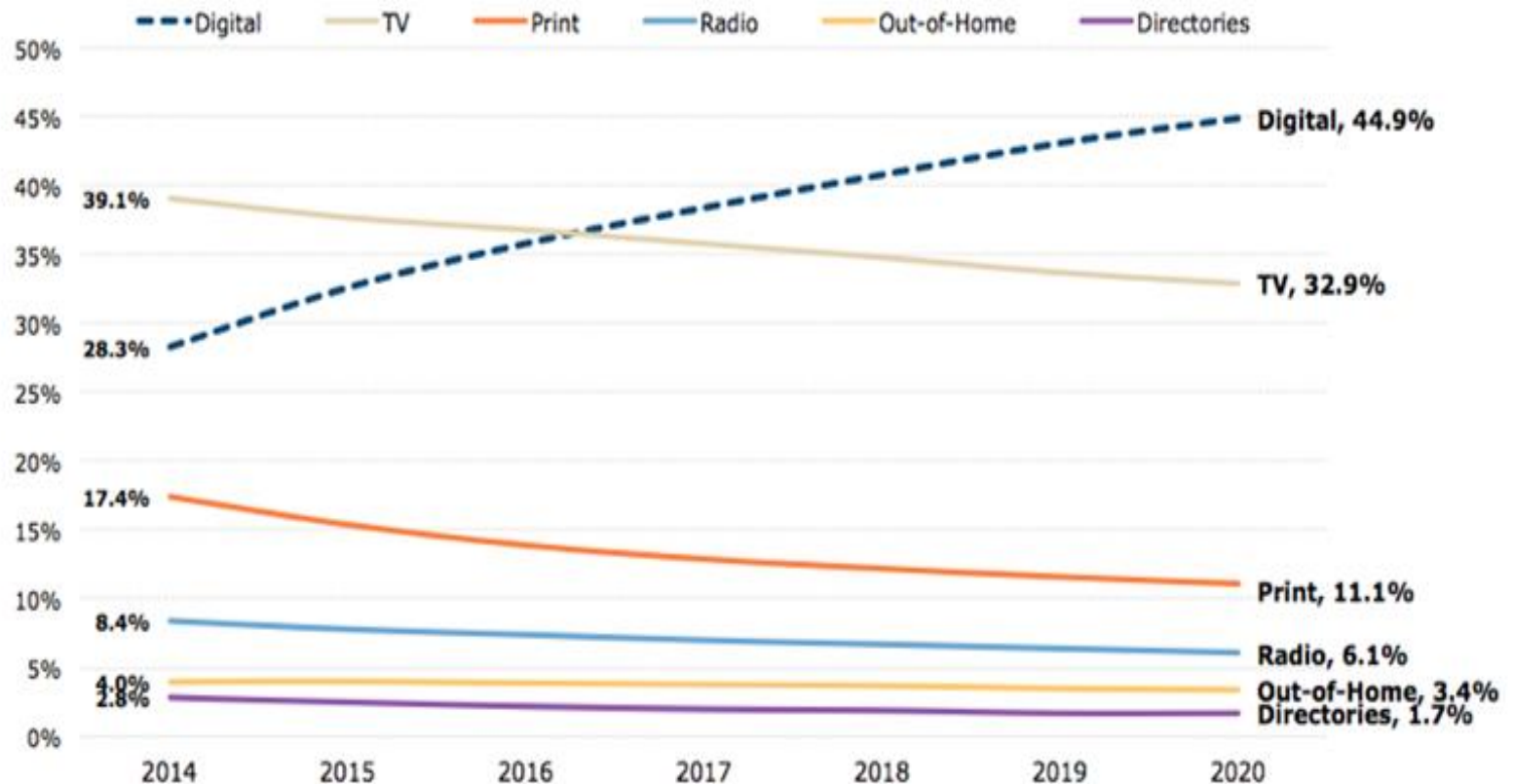
## 1) Newspaper advertising revenue has plummeted

*Total revenue of U.S. newspapers (in U.S. dollars)*



# The news business in two charts

## 2) Digital ad spending is eclipsing all other media



# 54%

U.S. digital ad market share controlled by  
“digital duopoly” in 2020



Local news outlets can't compete.



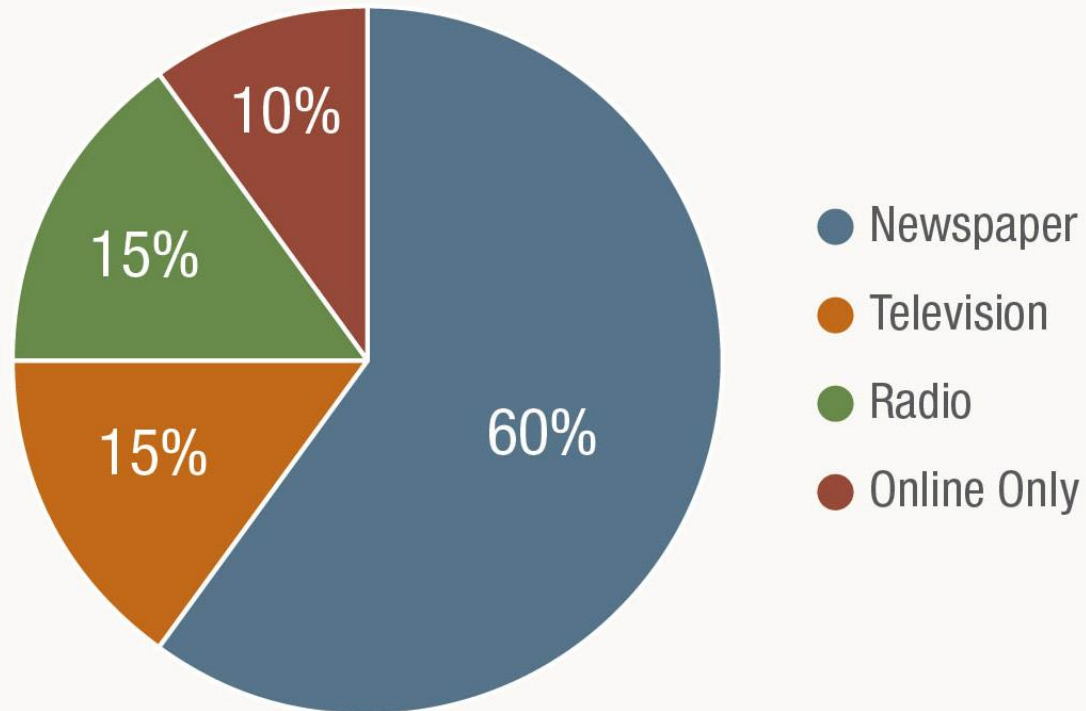
# Losing INDEPENDENT local news coverage hurts communities

- Declining civic engagement
- Political polarization
- Less informed voters
- Fewer political candidates
- Higher government costs
- Slower economic growth

## FCC's Eight Critical Issues:

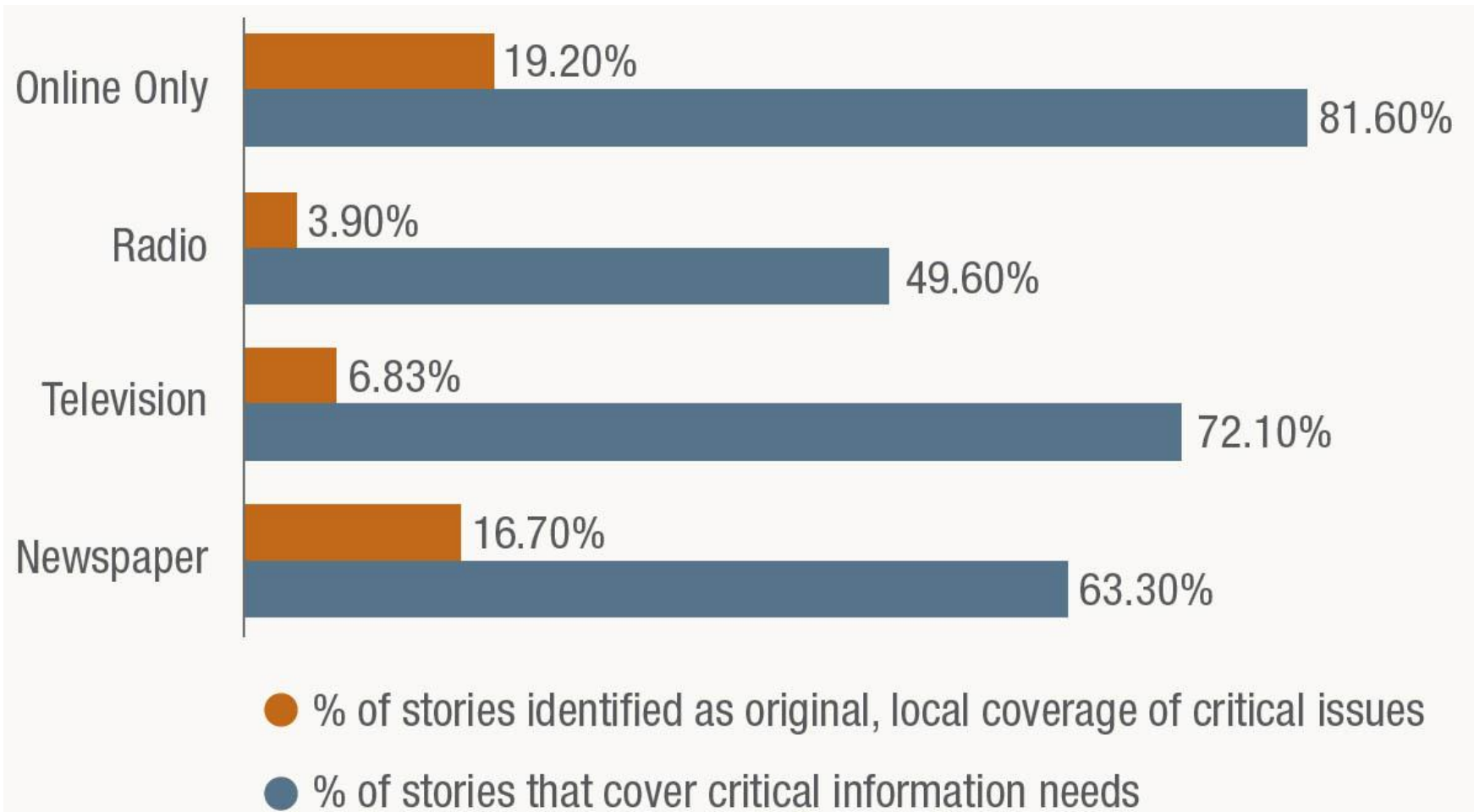
- Emergencies and risks
- Health and welfare
- Education
- Transportation
- Economic opportunities
- The environment
- Civic information
- Political information

## % (SHARE) OF STORIES IDENTIFIED AS ORIGINAL, LOCAL COVERAGE OF CRITICAL ISSUES



*Source: "Who's Producing Local Journalism? Assessing Journalistic Output Across Different Outlet Types," Duke University, DeWitt Wallace Center for Media and Democracy, 2019*

# Critical Coverage for Communities: By Media Type



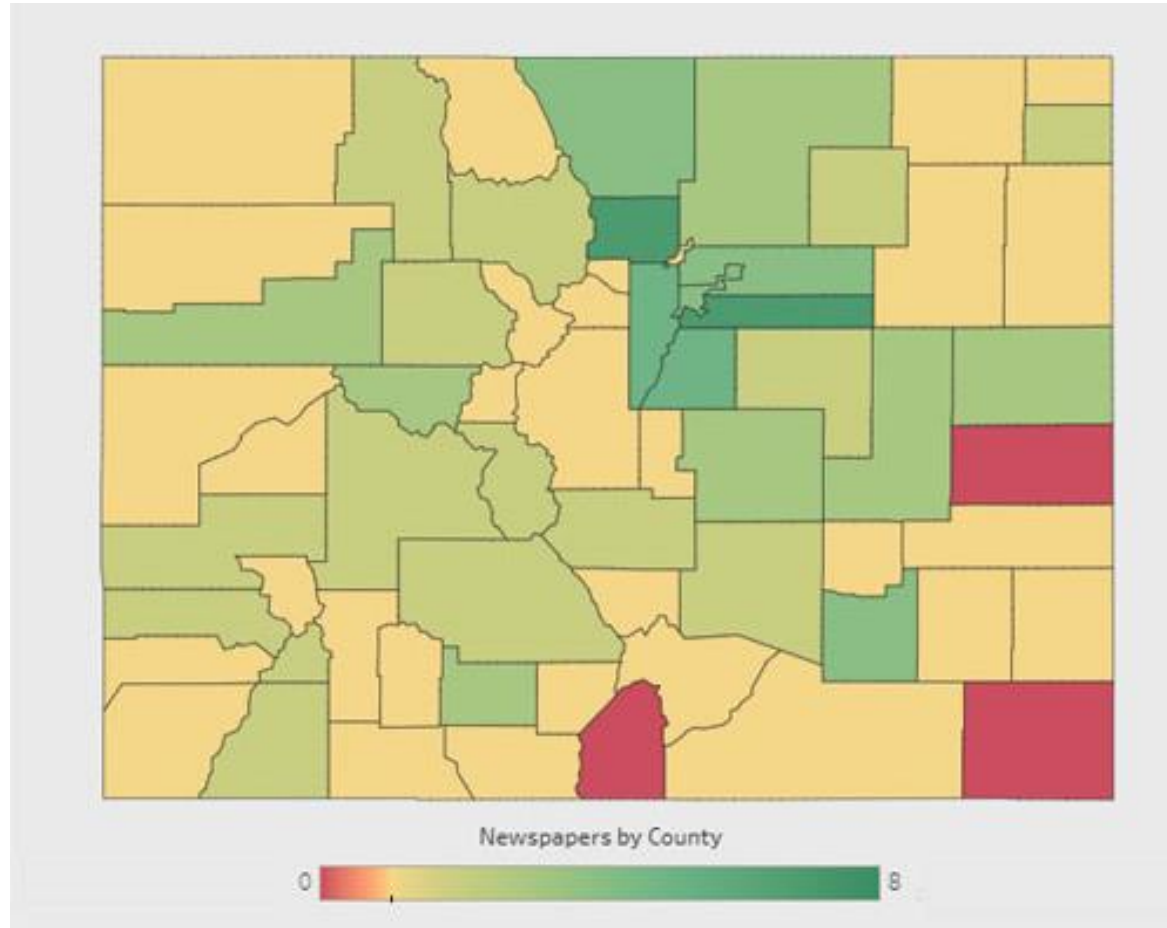


# CO newspaper circulation by owner type

## CO NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION BY OWNER TYPE

OWNER TYPE	# OF CO PUBLICATIONS	TOTAL PRINT CIRCULATION	% OF CO PRINT CIRCULATION
Colorado-Owned Small Businesses	93	615,993	51%
Investment Firms / Hedge Funds	24	371,439	28%
Regional or National Chains	34	231,024	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>1,218,456</b>	<b>100%</b>

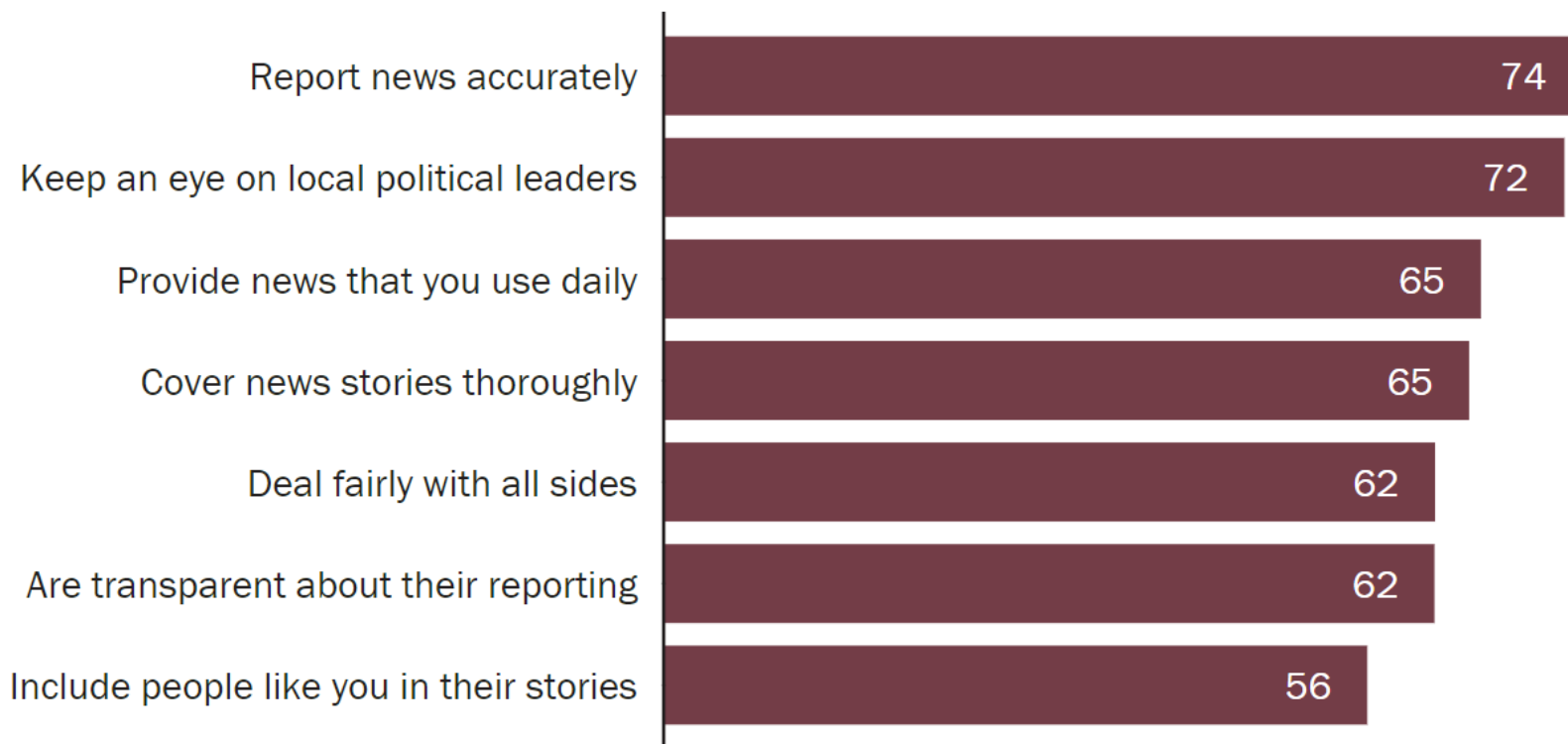
# Colorado's expanding news deserts



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*Source: "The Expanding News Desert," Penelope Abernathy Muse,  
UNC Chapel Hill University, 2019*

# % of Denver adults who say their local news media do each of the following WELL:



*Source: "For Local News, Americans Embrace Digital but Still Want Strong Community Connection," Pew Research Center, March 2019.*



% of Denver adults who say they PAID for local news in the past year:

15%



M3: Machine  
learning, migration,  
mountains  
unconference

# COLORADO MEDIA PROJECT

Local news is a public good.

CMP & OpenNews  
6/12/2019

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# Why a new chapter for 24 community newspapers matters for Colorado — and the nation



Melissa Milios Davis

May 3 · 5 min read



Colorado Community Media titles

As hedge funds and billionaires clash swords over control of big-city newsrooms nationwide, a quiet coalition of heavyweight collaborators has conspired to save a less prestigious — but just as vital — type of local news.



# Colorado News Collaborative (COLab)



## FOUNDING PARTNERS:

Associated Press  
Chalkbeat Colorado  
Colorado Broadcasters Association  
Colorado Freedom of Information Coalition  
The Colorado Independent  
Colorado Media Project  
Colorado Press Association

Colorado Public Radio  
The Colorado Sun  
Institute for Nonprofit News  
KGNU Community Radio  
9News  
Open Media Foundation  
Rocky Mountain Public Media



# Local News Collaboration in the Time of COVID



Melissa Milios Davis

Apr 24, 2020 · 3 min read



Starting Sunday, April 26, in front-page newspaper stories and broadcast features statewide, Colorado News Collaborative partners are releasing their first major collaborative storytelling project: [COVID Diaries Colorado](#).

# COVID Diaries Colorado: A Day in the Pandemic

[FIND YOUR LOCAL NEWS](#)

[DONATE](#)



[ABOUT COLAB](#)

[PROJECTS & IMPACT](#)

[FOR OUR NEWS PARTNERS](#)

[FOR COMMUNITY](#)

COVID Diaries Colorado

## A DAY IN THE PANDEMIC

On April 16, the deadliest day to date in the U.S. coronavirus pandemic, scores of reporters from across Colorado set out to find how people were coping. They found stories of grit, ingenuity and hope.

*April 16, 2020 – 22 news outlets*



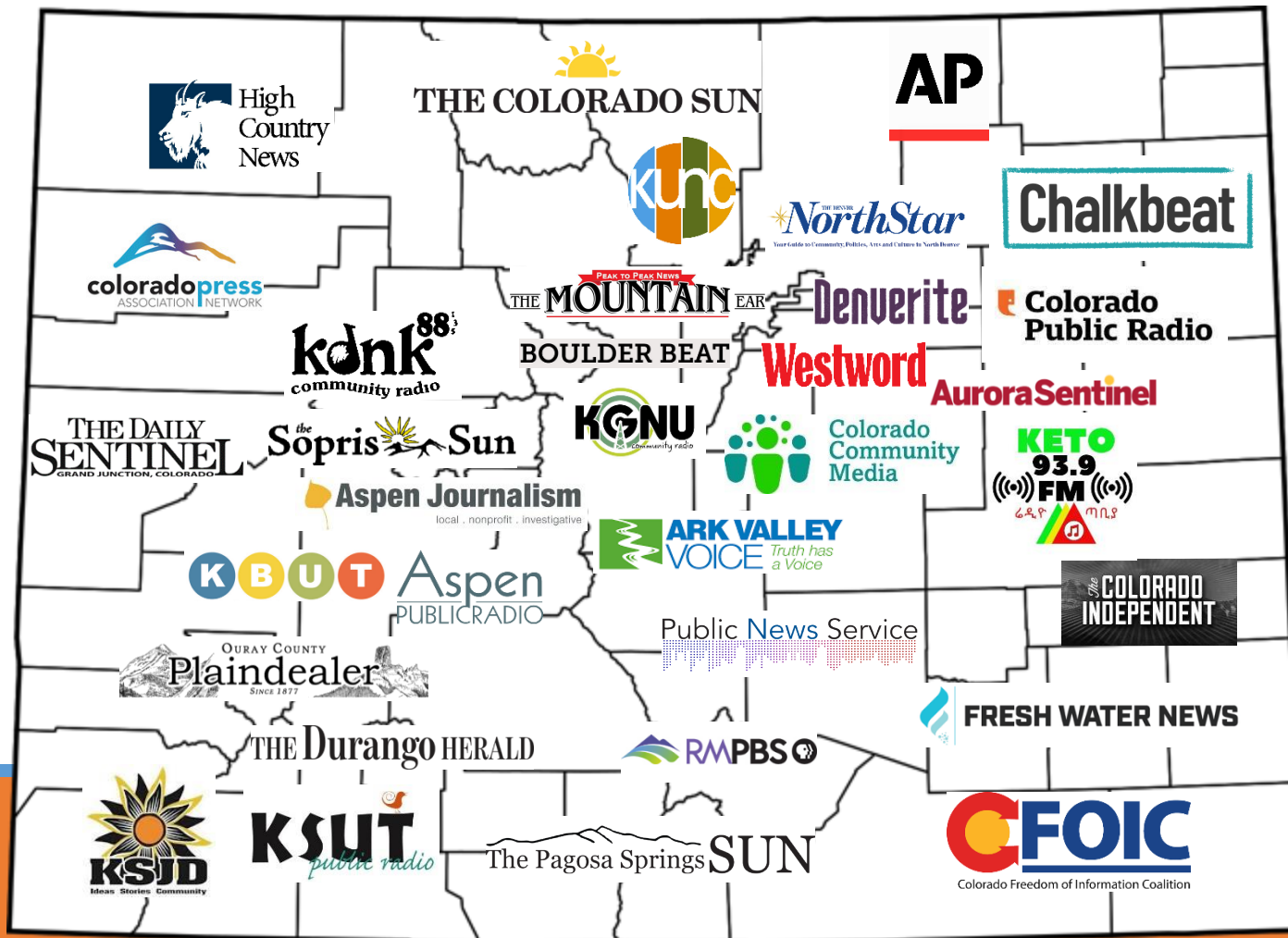
# Colorado News Collaborative (COLab)



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*April 16, 2021 – 120 news outlets*

# 2020 Colorado Media Project Grantees





# News Voices: Colorado



## THE PAST AS PROLOGUE FOR LATINX COMMUNITIES IN COLORADO

Journalists and journalism institutions are rethinking how they center the needs and desires of communities of color. But there is still a long history of disinvestment and harm that newsrooms must address to repair their relationships with Latino/a/x, Black and Indigenous communities.



## LINEAGES OF HARM, FUTURES OF REPAIR

What is the history of media and race in Colorado? What role has journalism played in contributing to anti-Black rhetoric and narratives? How can acknowledging this history inform our journalism and begin to repair active distrust between Black communities and newsrooms?

Feb 3, 2021 · Lauren Archuletta



## REFRAMING RESISTANCE COVERAGE CAN BUILD TRUST IN LOCAL NEWS

News Voices: Colorado is listening to residents around the state to understand their questions about how local news is covering the protests, how that coverage is specifically impacting Black residents — and what can be done to repair trust.

Oct 6, 2020 · Philip Clapham





## LOCAL NEWS IS A PUBLIC GOOD

Public Pathways for Supporting Coloradans'  
Civic News and Information Needs in the 21st Century

**1. Modernize the ways local and county governments make public data accessible to residents and journalists.**

## **2. Pay for ads in independent, local journalism outlets to reach local residents with critical civic information.**





# The New York Times

OPINION  
GUEST ESSAY

## How New York City Is Saving Its Local News Outlets

May 20, 2021



John Taggart for The New York Times

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Official Website of the City of New York



NYC Resources

NYC311

Office of the Mayor

Events

Connect

Jobs

Mayor

First Lady

News

## Mayor de Blasio Signs Executive Order to Ensure Information About City Services Reaches All New Yorkers

May 22, 2019

*Executive Order directs city agencies to spend at least 50 percent of their annual print and digital publication advertising budget toward community and ethnic media outlets*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor de Blasio signed an executive order today mandating all city agencies spend at least 50 percent of their annual print and digital publication advertising in community and ethnic media outlets. The Executive Order becomes effective beginning in Fiscal Year 2020. Since Mayor de Blasio came into office, the City has increased its advertisement spending in community and ethnic media by over 220 percent from \$850,000 in FY13 to \$2.74 million in FY18.

New York City is the most diverse city in the country with New Yorkers speaking over 200 languages. Community and ethnic media provides an important way for the City to connect with all residents and ensure services reach all communities. This executive order is part of the de Blasio Administration's plan to provide equal access to City services to all communities citywide, and strengthening its commitment to community

**3. Create business development opportunities that stimulate innovation in local civic news, and support media entrepreneurship – especially to reach underserved communities.**

# Public Pathways for Supporting Coloradans' Civic News and Information Needs



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## NEW JERSEY CIVIC INFORMATION CONSORTIUM

[LEARN MORE](#)

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**4. Increase support for public libraries and universities to help meet basic community news needs, provide training for media literacy and storytelling, and host nonpartisan convenings.**



[TV Schedule](#)[Upload Media](#)**LONGMONT  
PUBLIC  
MEDIA**[Create ▾](#)[Watch ▾](#)[Podcasts](#)[Equipment](#)[LPM Radio](#)[Events](#)[Classes ▾](#)[Support](#)[About ▾](#)[Watch](#)[Join](#)

# Community Media Powered By You

Longmont Public Media is a media makerspace devoted to the education, production, and distribution of local media that matters to you.

[Get Involved →](#)[Watch Our Channels ▶](#)

## Latest Videos



Sister Cities Signing  
Ceremony: Longmont +



LIVE: Thursday Nights at  
the Museum – The



City Council Regular  
Session – September 14,

## Latest News

Longmont City Council At-I  
ndidate Forum & May  
Debate

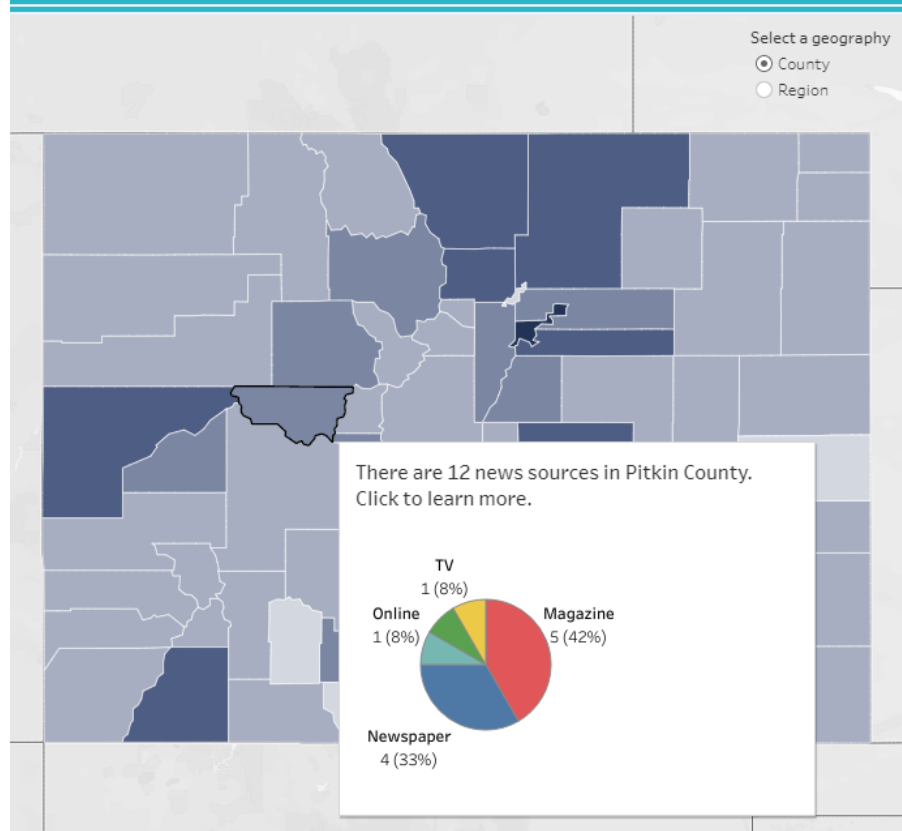
LONGMONT PUBLIC MEDIA  
LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
OF THE UNITED STATES

Longmont Public  
Media, League of



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# Local and Reliable News Sources of Colorado



To view details on the news sources in a County or Region, please click on an area on the map.

**5. Provide local tax incentives for media business owners who donate community news assets and seed local philanthropic trusts to meet local civic information needs.**



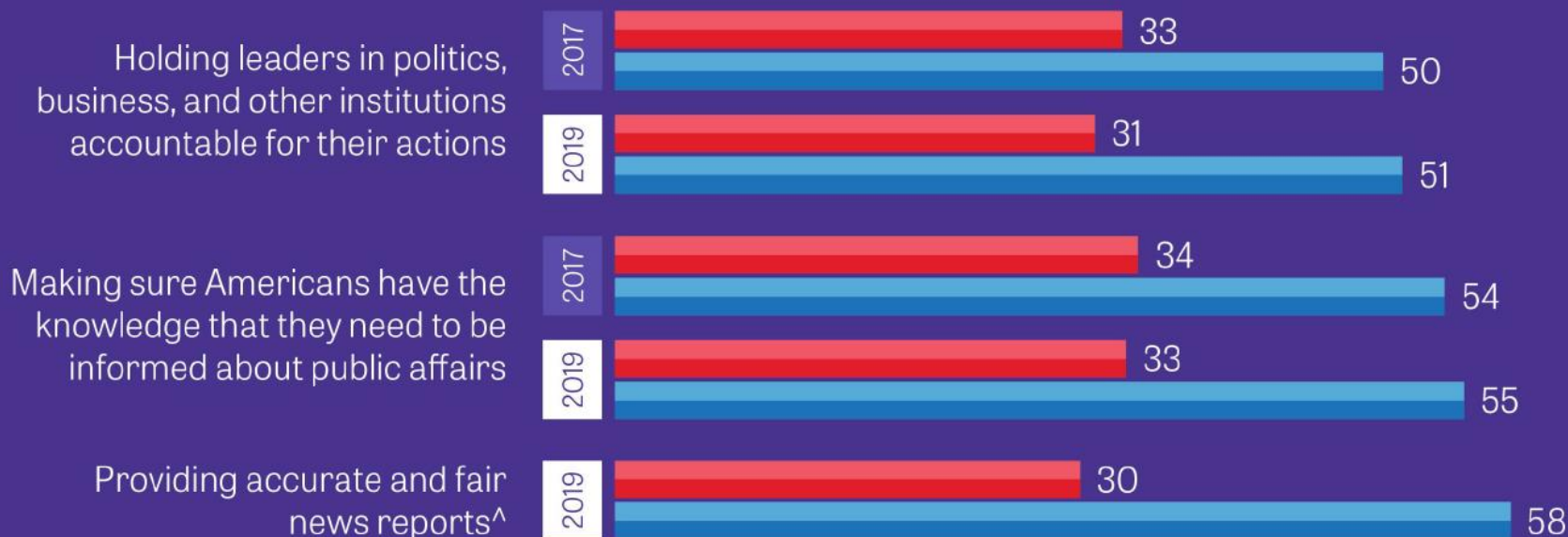
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# Americans value the roles the media plays in U.S. democracy

*How important is the role of the news media in accomplishing each of the following goals?*

■ % Critical    ■ % Very important



^ Item wording in the 2019 survey differed from the 2017 question; No comparison is available.



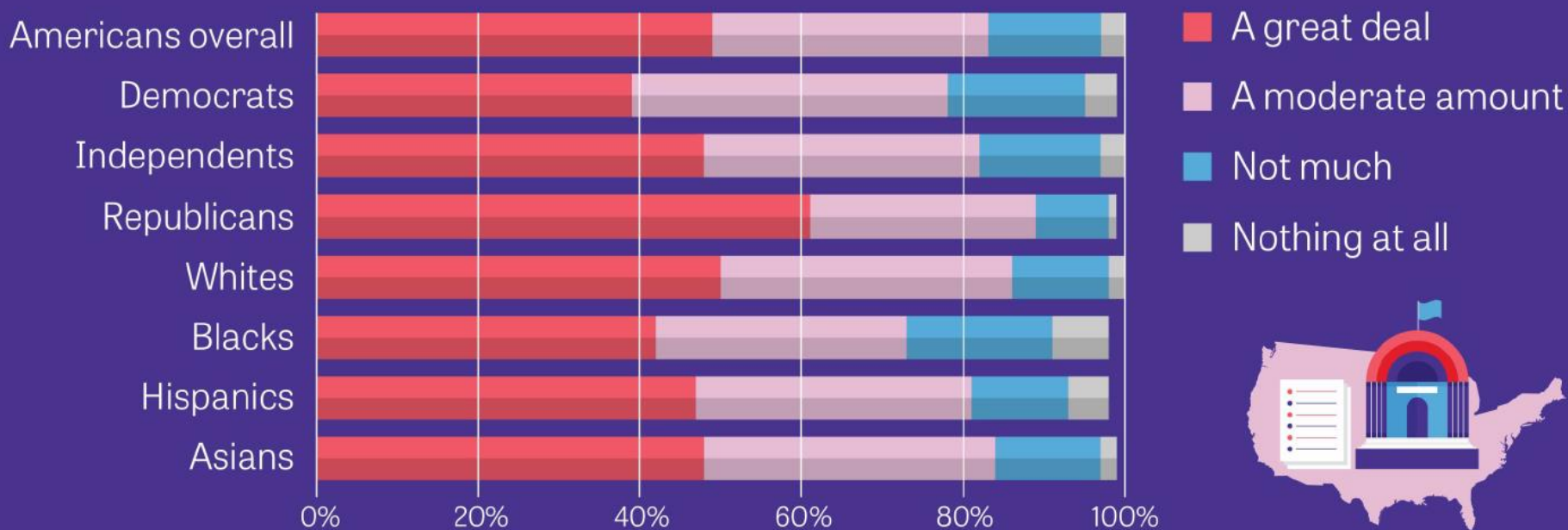
KNIGHT  
FOUNDATION

GALLUP

#trustinnews

# A majority of Americans believe the media can heal U.S. political divisions

*How much do you think the news media could do to heal political divisions in this country?*



KNIGHT  
FOUNDATION

GALLUP

#trustinnews

# THANK YOU!

## MELISSA MILIOS DAVIS

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[www.gatesfamilyfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfamilyfoundation.org)

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