



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 719

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 6812

House of Representatives, April 16, 2025

The Committee on Planning and Development reported through REP. KAVROS DEGRAW of the 17th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PUBLICATION OF MUNICIPAL LEGAL NOTICES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 1-2 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

3 (a) As used in this section, "chief elected official" has the same
4 meaning as provided in section 4-124i, "municipality" means any town,
5 city or borough, and "sufficient circulation" means a total readership of
6 not less than fifteen per cent of the households in a municipality, as
7 determined by the most recent decennial census, where such readership
8 is calculated as the sum of the average number of print and online
9 subscribers and unique online visitors in such municipality each month
10 over the preceding twelve-month period.

11 (b) Each provision of the general statutes, the special acts or the
12 charter, ordinances or regulations of any [town, city or borough which]

13 municipality that requires the insertion of an advertisement of a legal
14 notice in a daily newspaper shall, until June 30, 2026, be construed to
15 permit such advertisement to be inserted in a weekly newspaper. [; but
16 this section shall not be construed to reduce or otherwise affect the time
17 required by law for giving such notice.]

18 (c) (1) During the period beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30,
19 2027, each provision of the general statutes, the special acts or the
20 charter, ordinances or regulations of any municipality that requires the
21 insertion of an advertisement of a legal notice in a newspaper shall be
22 construed to require such advertisement (A) in the daily or weekly
23 newspaper selected in accordance with subsection (d) of this section, or
24 (B) if no newspaper is determined to have sufficient circulation and
25 therefore not selected, on the Internet web site of such municipality, in
26 accordance with subsection (e) of this section.

27 (2) On and after July 1, 2027, each provision of the general statutes,
28 the special acts or the charter, ordinances or regulations of any
29 municipality that requires the insertion of an advertisement of a legal
30 notice in a newspaper shall be construed to require such advertisement
31 (A) in the daily or weekly newspaper selected in accordance with
32 subsection (d) of this section, if such newspaper is determined to have
33 sufficient circulation and therefore selected, and (B) on the Internet web
34 site of such municipality, in accordance with the provisions of
35 subsection (e) of this section.

36 (d) (1) Not later than April 30, 2026, and not less than every two years
37 thereafter, the chief elected official of each municipality shall identify
38 each daily or weekly newspaper that publishes or seeks to publish legal
39 notices in such municipality and determine whether each such
40 newspaper has sufficient circulation. Each determination by such
41 official that a newspaper has sufficient circulation shall be based on data
42 provided by each such newspaper, including, but not limited to, the
43 average number of print and online subscribers and unique online
44 visitors in such municipality each month over the preceding twelve-
45 month period. Such data shall be provided in a form and manner

46 prescribed by such official.

47 (2) Not later than June 30, 2026, and not less than every two years
48 thereafter, the chief elected official of each municipality that identifies
49 one or more daily or weekly newspapers having sufficient circulation
50 pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection shall select one such
51 newspaper to publish legal notices in such municipality. If such chief
52 elected official identifies two or more such newspapers, such selection
53 shall be based on criteria developed by such chief elected official.

54 (e) Each municipality required to publish legal notices on the Internet
55 web site of such municipality pursuant to subsection (c) of this section
56 shall (1) post a link on the home page of such Internet web site through
57 which the public may access such legal notices, (2) maintain each such
58 legal notice on such Internet web site for a period of not less than ninety
59 days, and (3) (A) file a copy of each such legal notice in the office of the
60 clerk of the municipality on the day such legal notice is published on
61 such Internet web site, or (B) transmit a copy of each such legal notice
62 by electronic mail to the regional council of governments for the region
63 in which such municipality is located.

64 (f) Whenever notice of any action or other proceeding is required to
65 be given by publication in a newspaper, either by statute or order of
66 court, the newspaper selected for that purpose, unless otherwise
67 expressly prescribed, shall be one having a substantial circulation in the
68 town in which at least one of the parties, for whose benefit such notice
69 is given, resides.

70 (g) Any error in a legal notice published by a municipality in
71 accordance with this section that is not attributable to such municipality
72 shall not affect the validity of such notice. Nothing in this section shall
73 be construed to reduce or otherwise affect the time required by law for
74 giving legal notice.

<p>This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:</p>
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Section 1	October 1, 2025	1-2
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Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Subsec. (c)(1)(B), "therefore not" was inserted before "selected", in Subsec. (c)(2)(A), "therefore" was inserted before the second occurrence of "selected", and in Subsec. (e)(2) "publish" was changed to "maintain", for clarity.

PD *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
All Municipalities	Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill results in a potential cost to municipalities beginning in FY 26 to the extent they require additional resources to determine if a newspaper has sufficient circulation as the bill requires municipalities that have a newspaper with sufficient circulation to continue publishing certain legal notices in the newspaper.

The Out Years

The bill may result in a potential savings or cost to municipalities beginning in FY 28 that is dependent on if the town is required to post certain legal notices in a newspaper with sufficient circulation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6812*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE PUBLICATION OF MUNICIPAL LEGAL NOTICES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill creates a framework for municipalities (towns, cities, and boroughs) to determine whether they must continue publishing required legal notices in a newspaper, or whether they can instead publish them on their websites because no paper has “sufficient circulation” locally. Generally, the bill defines “sufficient circulation” as a readership of at least 15% of households in the municipality. Beginning July 1, 2027, the bill requires all municipalities to post notices on their websites, but it also retains the newspaper publication requirement for municipalities that are served by a paper with sufficient circulation.

The bill creates a transition period between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027, during which time notices do not have to be posted online if they are published in a newspaper with sufficient circulation. After that time, if, following a process the bill sets, a newspaper is deemed to have sufficient circulation locally, then the municipality must publish legal notices in it, as well as posting them on its website. Under the bill’s process, the municipal chief elected official (CEO) must biennially make this determination using data supplied by the newspaper industry. The bill sets the requirements for posting legal notices online and specifies how confirmation of posting must be given.

Various existing state and local laws (statutes, special acts, charters, ordinances, or regulations) require municipalities to publish legal notices in a newspaper (such as notice of a town meeting, tax sale, or certain land use approvals). The specific requirements for publication vary, but many laws require municipalities to select a newspaper having

“a substantial circulation” in the jurisdiction. The Supreme Court recently considered what this means in light of, among other things, changes in the newspaper industry (see BACKGROUND).

The bill’s requirements for selecting where to publish legal notices apply instead of the requirements in current law. The bill’s provisions do not change existing state or local laws on publication deadlines or minimum frequency.

The bill specifies that a legal notice that contains an error is not invalid if the municipality complied with the bill’s provisions and the municipality is not responsible for the error.

The bill also makes minor and conforming changes, including broadening a provision in current law that allows required notices to be published in a free weekly paper instead of a daily paper to include notices required by local ordinances or regulations (this authority, as it applies to all notices, sunsets when the transition period begins on July 1, 2026).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

LEGAL NOTICE PUBLICATION

“Sufficient Circulation” Determination

Under the bill, “sufficient circulation” means a total readership of not less than 15% of households in a municipality (based on the most recent decennial census). The bill specifies that newspaper readership is calculated by adding together the average number of print and online subscribers and unique online visitors in the municipality each month over the preceding twelve-month period. (It is unclear how this readership calculation will work and the bill does not define “subscribers” or “unique online visitors.”)

By April 30, 2026, and at least biennially after that, the local CEO must (1) identify any daily or weekly newspapers that publish, or want to publish, legal notices in the municipality and (2) determine if each has “sufficient circulation.” The CEO must do so using data supplied by the

newspapers, including the average number of print and online subscribers and unique online visitors in the municipality each month over the preceding twelve-month period. The bill requires newspapers to provide requested data in the form and manner the CEO sets.

By June 30, 2026, and at least biennially after that, the CEO must select a single newspaper in which the municipality's legal notices will be published, if the CEO identified a paper or papers with sufficient circulation. The CEO can set the criteria for choosing which paper to publish legal notices in if more than one paper has sufficient circulation.

Print and Website Publication Requirements

The bill sets rules for a transition period, running from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027. Regardless of state or local laws on publishing legal notices in a newspaper, during the transition period, the bill requires municipalities to publish their required legal notices (1) in the newspaper selected by the CEO after his or her sufficient circulation determination, or (2) if the CEO did not find and select one, on the municipality's website, as described below.

Beginning July 1, 2027, all municipalities must publish legal notices on their websites. Municipalities that are served by a paper with sufficient circulation must also publish their legal notices in the paper the CEO designates.

Online Notices. Under the bill, if a legal notice must be published on a municipal website, the municipality must:

1. post a link on the website's home page for the public to access it;
2. keep it posted online for at least 90 days; and
3. either (a) file a copy in the municipal clerk's office on the day it is published online, or (b) transmit a copy by email to the regional council of governments for the region in which the municipality is located (the bill does not specify a deadline if this option is used).

BACKGROUND***Recent Connecticut Supreme Court Case***

Numerous statutes and other state and local laws require municipalities to publish their legal notices in a newspaper having “a substantial circulation” in the municipality. In 2024, the Connecticut Supreme Court held that a newspaper used by the borough of Fenwick’s zoning authority to publish its legal notices qualified as having “a substantial circulation,” even though none of the borough’s year-round residents subscribed to the paper (*9 Pettipaug, LLC v. Fenwick Plan. and Zoning Comm'n*, 316 A.3d 318 (Conn. 2024)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 21 Nay 0 (03/28/2025)