

HOUSE No. 2975

By Mr. Bowler of Springfield, petition of James J. Bowler that certain information obtained by persons engaged in the profession of journalism shall be privileged. The Judiciary.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Two.

AN ACT PROVIDING THAT CERTAIN INFORMATION OBTAINED BY PERSONS ENGAGED IN THE PROFESSION OF JOURNALISM SHALL BE PRIVILEGED.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 233 of the General Laws is hereby amended by
2 inserting after section 20B the following section: —

3 *Section 20C.* No persons engaged in the work of, or con-
4 nected with or employed by any newspaper or any press
5 association or any journal or any radio broadcasting station, or
6 any television station for the purpose of gathering, procuring,
7 compiling, editing, disseminating, publishing, broadcasting or
8 televising news shall be required to disclose the source of any
9 information procured or obtained by such person in the course
10 of his employment, in any legal proceeding, trial or investiga-
11 tion before any court, grand jury or petit jury, or any officer
12 thereof, before the presiding officer of any tribunal, or his
13 agent or agents, or before any commission, department, divi-
14 sion or bureau of the state, or before any county or municipal
15 body, officer or committee thereof.

16 As used in this section the following words shall have the
17 following meanings: —

18 “Newspaper” shall mean a paper that is printed and dis-
19 tributed ordinarily not less frequently than once a week, and
20 has done so for at least one year, and that has at least a 25%

21 yearly average of news-editorial contents such as news, articles
22 of opinion (as editorials) features, advertising or other matter
23 regarded as current interest, has a general circulation and must
24 be formed of printed sheets.

25 "Magazines" shall mean a publication containing news which
26 is published and distributed periodically, and has done so for at
27 least one year and must be formed of printed sheets.

28 "News Agency" shall mean a commercial organization that
29 collects and supplies news to subscribing newspapers, maga-
30 zines, periodicals and news broadcasters.

31 "Press Association" shall mean an association of newspapers
32 and/or magazines formed to gather and distribute news and
33 journalistic information to its members.

34 "Wire Service" shall mean a news agency that sends out
35 syndicated news copy by wire to subscribing newspapers,
36 magazines, periodicals or news broadcasters.

37 "Professional journalist" shall mean one who, for gain or
38 livelihood, is engaged in gathering, preparing or editing of news
39 for a newspaper, magazine, news agency, press association, wire
40 service or broadcast medium.

41 "News" shall mean written, oral or pictorial information or
42 communication concerning local, national or worldwide events
43 or other matters of public concern or public interest of
44 affecting the public welfare.