



January 29, 2026

Testimony for the Record

Submitted to the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees for the 2026 Joint Legislative Hearing on Elementary and Secondary Education

Dear Chair Pretlow, Chair Krueger, Sen. Mayer, Assembly Member Benedetto, and Honorable Members of the Senate and the Assembly,

On behalf of The News Literacy Project (NLP), we encourage meaningful action to support news and AI literacy as core components of civic education.

NLP is a nonpartisan education nonprofit that works with teachers, school districts, states and community partners to ensure students receive news literacy instruction before they graduate from high school. During the 2024-25 school year, NLP's free resources were used by 15,000 educators to teach more than 575,000 students in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In New York, this included more than 2,400 educators, nearly 50,000 students and over 390 school districts.

Young people are growing up in the most complex information environment in history. They need the skills, knowledge and dispositions to navigate this environment successfully — to avoid being misled, scammed or manipulated; to make informed decisions; and to take part in civic life in ways that reflect their own values and experiences.

A critical \$15 million investment to modernize civic learning through media, news and AI literacy would strengthen the state's approach to guaranteeing civic-ready students. This allows every school to have a certified library media specialist, establishes a statewide Task Force on Media, News, and AI Literacy Integration in K–12, supports pilot programs and sustained professional development, and includes media, news, and AI literacy among the state's required instructional topics or learning standards.

By investing in media and news literacy, New York can empower students to become informed and active members of society. Please reach out to me should you have further questions at csalter@newslit.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CSalter", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Charles Salter

President & Chief Executive Officer