



AD INDUSTRY URGES WHITMER TO END PARTIAL MICHIGAN AD BAN

4A's, AAF, ANA, IAB, NAI Say Ban Violates Free Speech, Hurts Ad-Supported News, Offers No Benefit to Public Safety

Washington, DC – April 16, 2020 – Five of the nation's largest advertising trade associations today released a joint statement urging Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer to rescind a portion of [Executive Order No. 2020-40](#) prohibiting certain types of advertising in Michigan.

The following statement was issued by the 4A's (American Association of Advertising Agencies), American Advertising Federation (AAF), Association of National Advertisers (ANA), Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), and Network Advertising Initiative (NAI).

"In times of crisis, governments must take strong action to ensure public safety, and we commend Governor Whitmer for her efforts to protect the people of Michigan during this perilous time.

"Unfortunately, a section of the Governor's recent [executive order](#) damages Michigan's advertising industry by prohibiting lawful speech, while providing no benefit to public safety, so we urge the Governor to rescind that section immediately.

"As the order itself notes, news media is part of our critical infrastructure. Advertising provides revenue to support both news organizations and digital services, including the massive public service campaigns that are educating Michigan residents about how to protect themselves from COVID-19.

"Policymakers should support that financial model, rather than undermining it. Instead, the order places unconstitutional restrictions on advertising by prohibiting 'advertising or promotion of goods that are not groceries, medical supplies, or items that are necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and basic operation of residences,' as well as short-term property rentals.

"In arbitrarily prohibiting advertising by large retailers and rental property owners, the order violates a fundamental tenant of the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of free speech by targeting specific speakers based on what they want to say. These restrictions have no benefit for public health and do nothing to advance any government interest yet are in clear violation of that constitutional right.

“In short, these restrictions will not protect public health, improve safety, or reduce the burden on our overwhelmed front-line emergency workers, but they could cause lasting and unintended damage to Michigan's news providers and advertising industry. We urge the Governor to revoke these restrictions as soon as possible.”

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