



April 22, 2022

Re: Memorandum of Support for Freelance Isn't Free Act S8369 (Gounardes)/A9368 (Bronson)

The National Association of Science Writers is a community of journalists, authors, editors, producers, public information officers, students and people who write and produce material intended to inform the public about science, health, engineering, technology, and the environment. The association was formally incorporated in 1955 in New York with a charter to "foster the dissemination of accurate information regarding science through all media normally devoted to informing the public." NASW actively promotes press freedom and facilitates efforts to preserve and improve access to information related to science and scientific research. NASW promotes the professional interests of science writers nationally and globally, plays an active role in supporting efforts to ensure writers are paid for their work, and advocates for copyright protections for writers.

NASW strongly supports Freelance Isn't Free Act S8369/A9368. This bill is crucial in securing protections for freelance science writers in the state of New York, as well as freelance writers elsewhere with clients in New York. With passage of the statewide Freelance Isn't Free Act, these science writers will have the rights to a written contract, timely payment, and protection from retaliation. The law would empower the Department of Labor to enforce it, providing for real consequences for violations. This enforcement not only protects freelancers who work for New York State-based businesses, but also deters bad actors.

Nearly 40% of NASW's 2,500 members freelance full-time, and many more freelance on a part-time basis. New York and California are the top states where our members reside. Late payment, nonpayment, and lack of transparency around payment terms and other contract clauses are among the most common challenges our members and freelance science writers face, and they spend unpaid hours addressing these issues. Employees have the benefit of filing wage claims through the New York State Department of Labor, which helps them recoup lost wages. Freelance science writers deserve the same protections.

In 2017, New York City passed the Freelance Isn't Free Act. It is now time to make sure that all New York science writers and those with clients in New York are protected. Please co-sponsor S8369/A9368 to ensure that freelance science writers are paid in a fair and timely manner for their work. Our industry, and many other industries, depend on it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jill Adams', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jill Adams, President