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Perhaps the most crucial news source that the American people have access to is the one that continually shapes their daily lives. Subject matters concerning the economy, immigration and health care were the center of discussion during the 2016 presidential election; however, it was the job of local journalists to apply this information to their communities and electorates. By supplying information that was relevant to their neighbors, local journalists ignited civic participation. In the 2020 presidential election and future elections to come, local journalism will play a key role in increasing community involvement and encouraging bipartisan discussion.

During any presidential cycle, local journalists bring attention to marginalized people in their communities who are denied a voice. For the sake of simplicity, political pundits will categorize states into red and blue, dangerously painting entire communities with a broad brush that dehumanizes the American people. The self-professed political experts create false narratives in an effort to reduce complex, unique stories into one, thereby dismissing any attempt to strengthen our democracy. Because civil discussion begins by first understanding the viewpoints of others, local journalists in these communities reflect their neighbors and their views with the depth and detail that they deserve.

Furthermore, local journalism encourages bipartisanship that is essential for uniting the American people. However, as explained by Philip Bump in the Washington Post, the aftermath of Trump's impeachment hearings has affirmed the strong polarization between the opposing parties. And with the upcoming election, the American people will be divided more than ever. The problems that arise all boil down to one issue: people identify more with their party rather

than their candidate. Today, national news outlets add fuel to the fire by narrowing political discussions to divisive topics and providing biased information. As a result, conversations concerning politics become hostile, or people refrain from addressing the issues. In the midst of the toxic political atmosphere, local journalists can highlight the real issues affecting their individual communities and report how each of the presidential candidates will serve their needs. The process of supplying factual information that accurately reflects the interests of their communities will help voters consider candidates from both parties holistically, redirect discussion for the primary aim of improving society, and realize they are more similar than different.

Local journalism – the gateway to the hearts and minds of everyday people – engages the mind for civil discourse, and it is imperative that communities support their local news outlets. Even at times when discussion only seems to underline our sharp divisions, the conversations that promote understanding and inclusion will move our society forward. And with the 2020 presidential election right around the corner, local journalists will assure people across the country that their genuine, unfiltered voices will be heard.

## Works Cited

Bump, Philip. "Analysis | Partisanship Is Helping Trump in the Impeachment Fight More than It's Hurting Him." The Washington Post, WP Company, 16 Dec. 2019, [www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/12/16/partisanship-is-helping-trump-impeachment-fight-more-than-its-hurting-him/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/12/16/partisanship-is-helping-trump-impeachment-fight-more-than-its-hurting-him/).