

think it's good that finally we're having a discussion of just what is done and what is entailed when the state mandates a certain thing to be published, then attempts to determine how much is going to be charged for that publication. And here is what I'm trying to say, the newspaper is not owned by the state, it is not licensed by the state, it's supposedly a private entrepreneurial enterprise, able to charge whatever the traffic will bear and competition keeps the prices down and all of that. What the state might be in a position of having to do, and it takes an issue like this to bring it to our attention, is limit the amounts of things and the types of things that are required by law to be published. The newspapers have, some of them, have survived because of the numbers of things that are required by law to be published in a paper of general circulation in the county. Instead of worrying about how much is charged per line, as we are in this particular instance, we ought to look at the entire issue and we ought to stop requiring so much to be published. There are some essential things, maybe when a government body is going to meet, although some papers don't print that. Maybe the only things that should be required to be printed, by law, are those that pertain to legal actions, those matters that are before a court and where notification must be given to the parties. Other than that, don't require the publication of anything and the newspapers won't even come to us with these kinds of issues. If the state tried to order a certain thing to be printed, that could, perhaps, be considered an abridgment of the freedom of the newspaper to print or to refrain from printing what they choose. What is being discussed here is that should a paper decide to print these notices and the law does not require the paper to print them, should a paper decide to print them, this is the maximum that can be charged. If a paper looks at that maximum and says I do not want that amount, then they simply won't print it. If we arrive at a situation where no paper in the county will print for that amount, the proviso should be added to any law requiring publication is something to the effect that if no paper of general circulation in the county will publish the notice for the amount specified in statute, such notice need not be published. Then you will hear a different cry from the newspapers. But I think that is the approach that would be better than the one that we're taking here. And by here I mean the amendment which I voted to adopt and the attempt to put in statute what can be charged. We need to go back to the first question of what is being required to be noticed by way of the newspaper.