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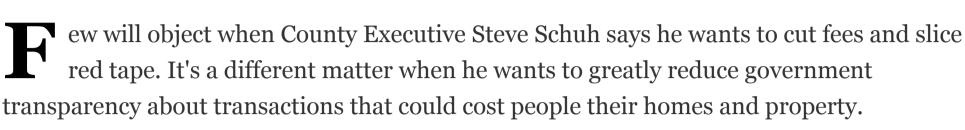
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## irreplaceable



JANUARY 31, 2016



The law requires that when a property is going to be publicly auctioned to pay taxes,

notices must run once a week for four consecutive weeks in two newspapers widely distributed in the county. The Capital is one of numerous newspapers in this state that run

such ads.

true.

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newspapers •

the development, the maintenance, the servers, the software licenses, the technical support, the customer service, and on and on. But much more importantly, no website — government or not — can replace printed notices. We know there's a growing perception "everyone" has online access. But that's not

Schuh has asked the county's senators to put in legislation — Senate Bill 142 — that would

website. He says this would eliminate the nearly \$140,000 a year the county spends on the

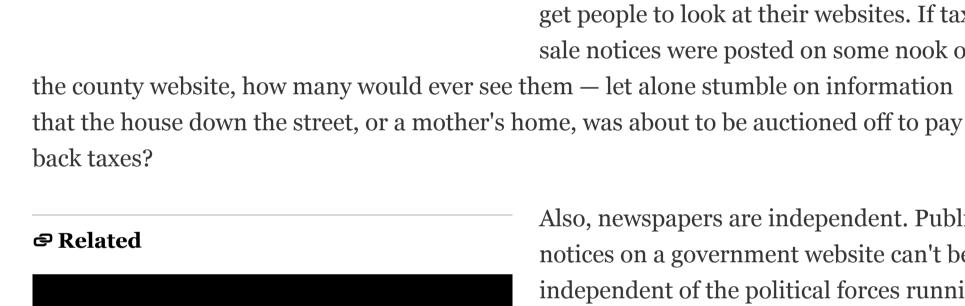
replace the publication requirement with a rule that the notice be placed on the county's

First, maintaining or expanding a government website is not free. The taxpayers pay for

ads. Those costs are carried over to a \$100 fee charged to the property buyers.

the Web at all. That goes up to 20 percent of African-Americans, a quarter of those living in rural areas, a third of the poorly educated and almost 40 percent of those

65 and older.



Schuh seeks end to tax sale notices in

Schuh seeks to cut red tape in 2016

get people to look at their websites. If tax sale notices were posted on some nook of Also, newspapers are independent. Public notices on a government website can't be independent of the political forces running

that government. Even if you exclude

altered or lost because of equipment

deliberate manipulation, content can be

Local newspapers strive to attract readers.

Governments have no similar incentive to

Their existence depends on it.

Pew Research reported last year that 15

percent of Americans — that would be

more than 48 million people — don't use

online as well. Each print ad we get is automatically posted on capitalgazette.com and on the Maryland Delaware DC Press Association site specifically created for public notices. But we don't imagine that's where most people are going to see them.

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We oppose government moves that endanger the public's right to know what the

This county's history should have taught us a few things about the importance of

government is up to, and we'd oppose this one even if it wasn't going to cost us a penny.

transparency. Schuh should think better of this and ask that Senate Bill 142 be withdrawn;

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back and saying, "Oh, they can see it on our website."

if he doesn't, county legislators should reject it.

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