



TALKING POINTS:

1-Independent Bookstores are the heartbeat of their communities

- Indie bookstores are more than retail stores--they're about the importance of relationships and community, and connection--the things we've been reminded of during Covid.
 - Gathering spot for every age - from kids to millennials to seniors (and one of the few opportunities for different generations to share an experience, through books)
 - Place to take pause, discover new books and authors, and find something you didn't know you were looking for
 - Respite from the digital community and place to re-engage with your real community

2-The COVID-19 pandemic has dealt a blow to indie bookstores and most small businesses--and we need to help now before it's too late.

- A July American Booksellers' Assn. survey of 400 member stores found that many have seen sharp sales declines over last year, and results suggest that some 20% of those surveyed may not survive until January 2021.
- Small Business Majority's survey results from August found that, without additional funding, 26% of small-business owners across the United States may not survive past the next three months, and nearly 44% say they may be unable to survive another six months.
- More than 1 independent bookstore has closed each week since the pandemic shut the country down.

3-If the struggling indie bookstores close the cause of death may be listed as Covid-19 but the preexisting condition will be Amazon.

- Amazon has been "boxing out" local bookstores and other small businesses all across the country, resulting in the loss of local jobs, local sales tax revenue, and a sense of neighborhood personality,

- community and tradition. People may not realize the cost and consequences of Amazon's "convenience" until it's too late.
- ABA believes that Amazon is a modern-day monopoly and a book industry monopoly specifically, and has had an overall negative impact on Main Street retailers, jobs, and communities across the country.
 - The House antitrust subcommittee has released its report on Amazon, Facebook, Apple, and Google detailing the anticompetitive behavior of the companies and recommending a number of reform measures.
 - A few Amazon Statistics
 - Amazon Q2 earnings doubled year over year
 - Amazon doubled its net profit YoY to \$5.2 billion, compared to \$2.6 billion at this time in 2019.
 - Amazon Q4 revenue projected to exceed \$100 billion for the first time. One of the very few American companies ever to achieve that, alongside Walmart and Exxon.
 - Amazon is forecasted to earn \$10B on October 13 and 14 for their Prime Day(s).

4-We vote with our dollars for the world we want to live in...the communities we live in need our dollars to survive and thrive.

- A national survey of independent business owners found that Local First initiatives are boosting customer traffic and improving the outlook on Main Street in our local communities, but policymakers need to do more to create a level playing field and ensure that small local businesses have an equal opportunity to compete.
- Choosing a locally owned business generates almost three times as much economic benefit for the local region as shopping at a chain, a new study has concluded (American Independent Business Alliance).
- The 2019 Civic Economics "Prime Numbers" study reports that approximately 28 percent of all revenue of indie bookstores immediately recirculates in the local economy. This translates into a local impact advantage of 68 percent over chain competitor Barnes &



Noble (which recirculates about 17 percent locally), and a massive local impact advantage of 610 percent over Amazon (which recirculates only 4 percent locally).

- Buying local means less packaging, less transportation, and a smaller carbon footprint.
- Local businesses donate to charities at more than twice the rate of national chains.
- The same way that our votes in the upcoming election will shape our country's future, where we spend our money in these final days of 2020 will determine the communities we find ourselves in come 2021.
- Local businesses give our neighborhoods character and offer diversity and personality.

Questions

Do you shop at Amazon? I always shop local first. I want to support my community. I shop everywhere but do my best to shop local and independent. The fact that I sometimes have to shop at Amazon, when I don't want to, demonstrates their monopoly power.

What about Bookshop? The best way you can help independent bookstores is by buying from your local bookstore directly but Bookshop is a great second choice, a great initiative to help support the indies.

I've heard online sales are up/book sales are up/there's a line outside my local store. It seems like things are good.? Stores are closed or operating at reduced capacity for the most part. Even if some stores are seeing a slight increase right now the increase is offset by an increase in Covid-related costs: hazard pay, shipping supplies, hand sanitizer and cleaning, higher cost of goods for online sales, etc.

Isn't this just capitalism and competition? Warehouse conditions, treatment of employees, competing unfairly with traditional retailers, strong arming publishers, refusing to collect sales taxes for decades, monopolistic practices, etc.



Why a campaign now? The stakes are high right now for indie bookstores, for small businesses, and for communities. It's time we break the Amazon trance.

Doesn't Amazon say they support small business? It's troubling that Amazon is co-opting the message of small business for their purposes when Amazon has hurt my small business and many others that I know, and as was proven in the House antitrust subcommittee's report released last week.

Doesn't Amazon provide all customers with the best prices and convenience? That's the story they tell, but it's not always true and the ultimate cost is a loss to our communities.

Doesn't Amazon donate to local causes? Amazon offers one half of one penny on every dollar while local businesses are supporting their communities, schools, and local nonprofits daily, directly and consistently.

Indiebound:

To find your local independent bookstore go to IndieBound.org.

Additional Ideas:

This isn't just about bookstores: everywhere you shop matters. Local businesses across all sectors are being affected similarly.

Additional Statistics:

- 1) A recent report from economic analysis firm Civic Economics says that sales by Amazon and third-party vendors — in 2018 alone — accounted for \$5.5 to \$7 billion in uncollected sales tax. The report also estimates that in just one year Amazon sales displaced the



equivalent of 540 million square feet of retail space and 900,000 retail jobs.

- 2) According to the Institute for Local Self Reliance:
 - a) Amazon has also greatly benefited from many years of resolute avoidance of sales tax collection on purchases, giving it an inequitable and potent strategic pricing advantage over bricks-and-mortar retailers that have complied with sales tax requirements.
 - b) In addition, Amazon has demanded special tax rebates and subsidies to locate distribution centers in cities and towns across the nation. This despite the fact that Amazon destroys more jobs than it creates. Bricks-and-mortar retailers employ 47 people for every \$10 million in sales, according to an analysis by the Institute for Local Self Reliance of U.S. Census data. (If you exclude chains and look only at independent retailers, the figure is even higher — 57 jobs.) But Amazon employs only 14 people per \$10 million in revenue.