

## **Sinclair Affiliate WGME Announces Investigative Reporter Jon Chrisos and the I-Team Win Prestigious IRE Award**

*Investigative efforts recognized by national prize identified deficiency in Veterans Crisis Line*

April 12, 2021 - WGME CBS 13 (Portland, ME), affiliate of Sinclair Broadcast Group Inc. (Nasdaq: SBGI), is proud to report that Investigative Reporter Jon Chrisos and the station's I-Team have been named recipients of the prestigious Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) Award. Chrisos and the WGME I-Team won this award for their impressive work identifying flaws in the Veterans Crisis Line, which were ultimately addressed by the United States Congress.

In 2020, Jon Chrisos and the I-Team discovered that the Veterans Crisis Line, a suicide prevention hotline dedicated exclusively to aiding American veterans in need, lacked the geolocation technology to properly identify the precise location of their callers. Through their investigative efforts, the I-Team was able to uncover an incident where a Veterans Crisis Line dispatcher, in response to a suicidal veteran's urgent request for help, sent emergency responders to the wrong veteran, in a different state, due to the lack of proper geolocation technology.

After Chrisos and team reported on the issue, Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Angus King (I-Maine) proposed an amendment to the VA appropriations bill. This new language aimed to directly address the problem, beyond the borders of the state of Maine, offering federal funds and support to enhance these systems.

"Jon and the I-Team's reporting spotlighted an issue that may have otherwise gone unnoticed," said Susan Walther, VP/General Manager of WGME. "They were able to spark a national conversation and as a result, progress is now being made to improve a vital service for our honored veterans."

WGME is one of just three local news broadcast stations to be recognized by the IRE Awards this year. This is the first time that a Maine-based television station earned this award.

"This win is a significant achievement not only for the WGME team, but for veterans everywhere," said Scott Livingston, Senior Vice President of News at Sinclair Broadcast Group. "This confirms the relevancy of local news and its ability to highlight critical issues impacting our local communities."

Following the I-Team's investigation, Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) worked to include language in the 2020 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) appropriations bill that encourages the agency

to use funds to address this issue – which, Collins noted, was a direct result of the I-Team’s investigation.

**About WGME:**

WGME is a CBS affiliate that is proud to deliver local news, weather, and other quality programming every day to communities all across Southern and Central Maine.

**About Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc.**

Sinclair is a diversified media company and leading provider of local sports and news. The Company owns and/or operates 21 regional sports network brands; owns, operates and/or provides services to 186 television stations in 87 markets; is a leading local news provider in the country; owns multiple national networks; and has TV stations affiliated with all the major broadcast networks. Sinclair's content is delivered via multiple platforms, including over-the-air, multi-channel video program distributors, and digital platforms. The Company regularly uses its website as a key source of Company information, which can be accessed at [www.sbgi.net](http://www.sbgi.net).

**Media Contact:**

Michael Padovano  
[sinclair@5wpr.com](mailto:sinclair@5wpr.com)