



February 11, 2021

Chair Riley, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 500 on behalf of the Greater Oregon Society of Professional Journalists.

This is a good -government bill that saves government money, promotes collaboration between government and requesters, and builds public trust:

- Gov. Kate Brown has [stated clearly](#) this office needs independence to be credible and effective, and she supports making this change happen.
- In 2020 a [very similar bill](#) backed by the Association of Oregon Counties and Special Districts Association of Oregon passed the Senate unanimously and House Rules without opposition before the session ended prematurely.
- Special Districts Association of Oregon lobbyist Mark Landauer [testified](#) in support of independence on Feb. 12, 2020, saying the Advocate's training is "really critical for our local governments to be able to understand and work with the public records in a manner that's transparent and available to all."
- Oregon State Archivist Stephanie Clark also [testified](#) in support, saying the Advocate sparked improvement by "leaps and bounds" in how records are provided with trainings and one-on-one assistance: "This work has made a positive impact in both the lives of government employees and requestors."
- The Advocate's office has [drawn plaudits](#) from members of the Oregon Association of Municipal Recordors and state-agency records officials.

Thank you for considering this testimony, I'll be happy to answer any questions.

-Nick Budnick, Co-chair, Freedom of Information Committee, Greater Oregon SPJ