

HB 2605 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

Action Date: 03/30/23

Action: Do pass with amendments, rescind subsequent referral to Tax Expenditures, and be referred to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 4-3-0-0

Yeas: 4 - Fahey, Kropf, Nosse, Valderrama

Nays: 3 - Breese-Iverson, Scharf, Wallan

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/9, 3/30

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Authorizes Department of Administrative Services to issue grants to University of Oregon Agora Journalism Center and Fund for Oregon Rural Journalism. Requires recipients to convene workgroup with specified representation to: (1) define and identify attributes of Oregon's local journalistic publications; (2) research local news and information ecosystems across Oregon; (3) identify and amplify community-centered, solutions-oriented journalism models; and (4) publicly report on findings by December 1, 2024. Directs workgroup to create local journalism resource center to provide resources to support local journalism and develop and implement subgrant program to meet local information needs of Oregon communities. Repeals provisions on January 2, 2026. Appropriates \$2.9 million of General Fund for grants.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Value of local journalism
- Removal of tax credit and need for study to identify solutions and next steps
- Agora Journalism Center map of news ecosystem
- Other state approaches, including Illinois and Massachusetts, with similar legislation
- Importance of journalism to the work of legislators

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

The Agora Journalism Center, a program of the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication, was created in 2014 with the stated foundational belief that the health of democracy and journalism are linked. The Center is now focused on strengthening the local information landscape through fostering and nurturing community-centered journalism. The Fund for Oregon Rural Journalism is a nonprofit led by journalism professionals that is committed to preserving professional journalism in rural Oregon. It offers training and support to rural news organizations.

House Bill 2605 A authorizes the Department of Administrative Services to issue grants to the Agora Journalism Center and Fund for Oregon Rural Journalism to: (1) convene a workgroup to research local news and information ecosystems and identify journalism models to amplify; (2) create a local journalism resource center; and, (3) develop a subgrant program to support local information needs of Oregon communities.