

Written testimony of Steve Forrester, CEO of EO Media Group in support of HB 3167.

Unlike so many newspapers in the news these days, EO Media Group is family owned and has been for over 100 years. Initially we were in Pendleton. Then in Pendleton and Astoria. Decades later, we came to Grant County and the Blue Mountain Eagle. Then the Wallowa County Chieftain in Enterprise. The Hermiston Herald was added much later. In January 1991, we acquired Oregon's most unique newspaper, the Capital Press. The intense focus of that newspaper is the often-neglected topic of agriculture.

Three years ago, we rescued the Bend Bulletin out of bankruptcy. In that transaction we also added newspapers in Redmond, LaGrande and Baker City. And most recently, we have announced plans to start a newspaper (in print and digital format) in Medford, which was suddenly left without a newspaper when the Mail Tribune shuttered its operations on January 13, 2023.

So, our roots are deep in this state and our coverage spans most of the regions of rural Oregon. Through all these eras, it has not been easy for my predecessors as well as for our editors and managers today. We have at times operated on very slender profit margins, especially when compared to media companies much larger than we are and more willing to decimate their newsrooms.

Public notices have been a staple of our company's revenue stream. We would be much diminished without them and challenged to continue serving the primarily rural communities our newspapers operate in around the state.