

2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION HB 2605 TESTIMONY

Date: February 9, 2023
To: House Committee on Rules
From: Jacob Loeb - Montavilla News
Re: Support for Protect Local Journalism, HB 2605

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, and members of the committee:

My name is Jacob Loeb, and I reside in Portland, Oregon. I own the Montavilla News, a hyperlocal community newspaper with roots back to 1912.

Local news is near collapse in Oregon. A staggering percentage of our State's citizens live in news deserts, where people have no local source for reliable information. Individuals fill that gap with unsourced social media and ratings-hungry national cable news. This situation breeds misinformation and distrust of the whole media industry.

News deserts are not the only place in Oregon this information deficiency causes social harm. As funding for well-staffed newsrooms vanishes, the scale and reach of those organizations also diminishes. Editorial teams passed over stories that impact smaller segments of the population due to limited staff, and to keep the remaining readers engaged, coverage tends towards rage-inducing articles. The information ecosystem in our community is unbalanced, and intervention is needed to protect the public from a potentially devastating news-free future.

Protect Local Journalism, HB 2605 will bolster trusted information in the population by informing the electorate. People tend to lean on political affiliation or campaign advertising when starved of details from a source embedded within their community. That creates entrenched positions and drives a political system where those who spend the most in an election prevail. Without a lengthy public conversation about our government's actions, good legislation, and quality politicians will always be one smear campaign away from irrelevance.

For these reasons, I urge your support for Protecting Local Journalism and to fund the measure fully. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Jacob H Loeb
Montavilla News

