

Minority Report

A-Engrossed

Senate Bill 686

Ordered by the Senate June 6
Including Senate Minority Report Amendments dated June 6

Sponsored by nonconcurring members of the Senate Committee on Rules: Senators BONHAM, THATCHER

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: Makes a committee to study local news models and submit a report on its findings. (Flesch Readability Score: 61.8).

[Digest: Makes online platforms choose to pay online news providers or donate to a group for civic information. Creates a group for civic information to give grants. (Flesch Readability Score: 63.4).]

[Requires online platforms to pay digital journalism providers or donate to the Oregon Civic Information Consortium. Allows an online platform to use an arbitration process to determine the percentage of an online platform's advertising revenue to be remitted to digital journalism providers.]

[Prohibits an online platform from retaliating against digital journalism providers. Requires online platforms to report annually certain information about compensation paid to digital journalism providers.]

[Establishes the Oregon Civic Information Consortium to advance research and innovation in media and technology. Directs that each public university shall participate in the consortium. Directs the consortium to award grants for applicants that seek to improve civic information.]

Establishes the Interim Committee on Civic Information. Directs the interim committee to research local news and information ecosystems and identify journalism models that can be replicated. Directs the interim committee to submit findings to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to rules and labor and business no later than December 1, 2026.

Creates an income tax credit for subscriptions to media news outlets and donations to certain journalism organizations. Prohibits a person from falsely advertising the availability of the tax credit. Allows the Department of Revenue to impose a civil penalty for violation. Applies to tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2025, and before January 1, 2031.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to civic information.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) The Interim Committee on Civic Information is established.

(2) The committee consists of five members appointed as follows:

(a) The President of the Senate shall appoint two members from among the members of the Senate from the majority party.

(b) The Senate Minority Leader shall appoint one member from among the members of the Senate from the minority party.

(c) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint one member from among members of the House of Representatives from the majority party.

(d) The House Minority Leader shall appoint one member from among the members of the House of Representatives from the minority party.

(3) The interim committee shall:

(a) Define and identify the attributes of Oregon's local journalistic publications;

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

(b) Research local news and information ecosystems across this state, especially those serving rural, underserved and other hard-to-reach communities, including multilingual, non-English and ethnically specific media ecosystems;

(c) Identify and amplify community-centered, solutions-oriented journalism within and outside of this state and beyond to serve as models for other communities to replicate; and

(d) Study Senate Bill 686 (2025), as amended by the typed amendments dated April 22, 2025, and adopted by the Senate Committee on Rules on May 5, 2025 (SB 686-3), with regard to any constitutionality issues under the United States and Oregon Constitutions and copyright issues.

(4) In carrying out subsection (3) of this section, the interim committee shall engage and seek input to the greatest possible from the following:

(a) Organizations supporting local journalism or representing local journalistic publications in Oregon, including publications that are headquartered in Oregon;

(b) Academic departments related to journalism;

(c) Nonprofit organizations performing work related to journalism;

(d) The philanthropic sector;

(e) Online platforms; and

(f) Civic organizations in Oregon.

(5) A majority of the members of the interim committee constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.

(6) Official action by the interim committee requires the approval of a majority of the members of the interim committee.

(7) The interim committee shall elect one of its members to serve as chairperson.

(8) If there is a vacancy for any cause, the appointing authority shall make an appointment to become immediately effective.

(9) The interim committee shall meet at times and places specified by the call of the chairperson or of a majority of the members of the interim committee.

(10) The interim committee may adopt rules necessary for the operation of the interim committee.

(11) The interim committee shall report in the manner provided in ORS 192.245, and may include recommendations for legislation, to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to rules and labor and business no later than December 1, 2026.

(12) The Legislative Policy and Research Director may employ persons necessary for the performance of the functions of the interim committee. The Legislative Policy and Research Director shall fix the duties and amounts of compensation of the employees. The interim committee shall use the services of continuing legislative staff, without employing additional persons, to the greatest extent practicable.

(13) All agencies of state government, as defined in ORS 174.111, are directed to assist the interim committee in the performance of the duties of the interim committee and, to the extent permitted by laws relating to confidentiality, to furnish information and advice the members of the interim committee consider necessary to perform their duties.

SECTION 2. Section 1 of this 2025 Act is repealed on December 31, 2027.

SECTION 3. Section 4 of this 2025 Act is added to and made a part of ORS chapter 315.

SECTION 4. (1) As used in this section, “media news outlet” means an online, print or other media outlet that:

1 (a) Has been in existence as a registered business for at least 12 months in the state in
2 which it is registered as a business; and

3 (b) Regularly employs staff journalists who produce news coverage on any topic of news
4 within Oregon.

5 (2) A credit in an amount not to exceed \$100, if reported on a joint return, or \$50, if re-
6 ported on any other type of return, shall be allowed against the taxes that are otherwise due
7 under ORS chapter 316 for the amount that the taxpayer paid or incurred during the tax year
8 for:

9 (a) The cost of subscriptions to media news outlets; and

10 (b) Donations to an organization that is recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of
11 the Internal Revenue Code and that supports professional journalists, news media profes-
12 sionals, government transparency and public records reform.

13 (3) A taxpayer claiming a credit under this section shall add to federal taxable income for
14 Oregon tax purposes any amount that is deducted for federal tax purposes and that also
15 serves as the basis for the credit allowed under this section.

16 (4)(a) A nonresident shall be allowed the credit under this section in the proportion pro-
17 vided in ORS 316.117.

18 (b) If a change in the status of a taxpayer from resident to nonresident or from nonres-
19 ident to resident occurs, the credit allowed under this section shall be determined in a
20 manner consistent with ORS 316.117.

21 (c) If a change in the tax year of a taxpayer occurs as described in ORS 314.085, or if the
22 Department of Revenue terminates the taxpayer's tax year under ORS 314.440, the credit
23 allowed under this section shall be prorated or computed in a manner consistent with ORS
24 314.085.

25 (5) The credit allowed in any one tax year may not exceed the tax liability of the tax-
26 payer.

27 **SECTION 5.** (1) A person that is not a media news outlet as defined in section 4 of this
28 2025 Act may not advertise that a payment to the person is eligible for the tax credit de-
29 scribed in section 4 of this 2025 Act.

30 (2) The Department of Revenue may impose a civil penalty of up to \$500 for each violation
31 of this section.

32 **SECTION 6.** Section 4 of this 2025 Act applies to tax years beginning on or after January
33 1, 2025, and before January 1, 2031.