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**State Sen. Jama, and Members
Oregon State Senate Committee on Rules
Salem, OR**

Chair Jama and members,

Communities rely on local news. When they want to know where those police sirens were headed, what their city council is up to and when they just need a dose of good news about their neighbors, they turn to us.

And while we journalists continue to work harder than ever to keep our communities active and engaged, tech giants have gone unchecked in their ability to strip and benefit from the products of our trained professionals without giving us a cent in return.

I have been a professional journalist for five years, and my team consists of journalists of all levels, from those starting out to some who are eyeing retirement after a storied career informing their communities. And in my short time, I have seen colleagues of all levels leave this profession because they could not support themselves and their families with their income.

In my newsroom, it is nearly unheard of to find a journalist who is able to live and work in their communities without a partner or roommate to supplement the household income. If a family emergency were to strike, my colleagues would be forced to decide whether to continue in the profession they chose (not for the money, but for the love of their communities and facts) or find employment elsewhere to stay afloat.

While already overburdened with more news than we can cover with only 40 hours, the weight of whether our newsrooms will even exist in a month, three months, a year adds to the strain. The journalists that surround me have chosen, time and time again, to stay and fight for what they believe in: Holding power to account and giving readers the information they need to be an active and engaged member of their community.

Without an infusion of funds, no less from megacompanies who have been allowed to reap the benefit of our hard work for years, the weight of carrying a dying industry grows.

But it doesn't have to be this way. The companies who benefit from our diligence in shining a light in the darkness can provide benefit to us. With more income funneled to the reporting staff, my trained colleagues would be able to make more than the starting wage at In-N-Out Burger down the street (currently, some are not after multiple dedicated years of professional journalism). We

could have the ability to hire more reporters in our communities and reduce the strain on my overworked teammates.

And it's not just for us, those producing the news. The benefit of having more staff would multiply the community benefit as well. With more resources, we would be able to share more news, investigate more wrongdoing and continue to report the information and decisions that truly matter to your constituents.

We've all heard the saying: Democracy dies in darkness. That democracy begins at the local level: your school boards, your city councils, your fire districts. We must legislate a solution to keeping bright minds in the field of journalism without having to sacrifice our personal wellbeing.

Sincerely,

Lauren Bishop

Editor-in-chief: Beaverton Valley Times, Columbia County Spotlight, Forest Grove News-Times, Hillsboro News-Times, Newberg Graphic, The (Tigard-Tualatin-Sherwood) Times, Woodburn Independent

Undersigned:

Jaime Valdez, photojournalist for the Portland Tribune, Beaverton Valley Times, Columbia County Spotlight, Forest Grove News-Times, Hillsboro News-Times, The (Tigard-Tualatin-Sherwood) Times, Woodburn Independent, Wilsonville Spokesman, West Linn Tidings

Sophia Cossette, reporter for the Woodburn Independent

Scott Keith, reporter for the Beaverton Valley Times

Ray Pitz, reporter for The (Tigard-Tualatin-Sherwood) Times

Nick LaMora, reporter for the Forest Grove News-Times and the Hillsboro News-Times

Gary Allen, editor of the Newberg Graphic