

Senate Committee on Rules

Honorable Chair Kayse Jama
Honorable Vice-Chair Daniel Bonham
Honorable Member Jeff Golden
Honorable Member James Manning Jr.
Honorable Member Kim Thatcher

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

April 9, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

We write to respectfully request your **YES vote on Senate Bill 686**, the Oregon Journalism Protection Act.

Supporters of this bill include Oregon print and digital publishers, commercial and public broadcast media, professional journalists, their labor unions, journalism educators, local news support organizations and America's newspapers. Senate Bill 686 would ensure local news organizations in Oregon are fairly compensated by the Big Tech platforms that crawl, scrape and sell advertising against the local news produced by Oregon's journalists.

The bill creates a third-party arbitration system to assess the economic value of Oregon news to Big Tech platforms. The tech platforms can also avoid the uncertainty of arbitration by opting to pay into a fund to support journalism jobs and community news across Oregon.

The need for action is more urgent than ever.

Since 2022, while valuations soared for multitrillion-dollar Big Tech platforms, nearly 20 local news outlets in Oregon – including around 13% of Oregon's newspapers – have closed or have been merged with other outlets, according to a forthcoming report by the University of Oregon Agora Journalism Center.

When surveyed about what kind of support Oregon newsrooms need, a survey by the Agora Journalism Center of 70 journalists from predominantly from small newsrooms across the state showed overwhelming demand for hiring extra staff above all other forms of support.

That's what SB 686 aims to do, by depositing 90% of the bill's proceeds into a fund that distributes the money back to local newsrooms based on the number of journalists they employ.

The other 10% of the bill's proceeds would create a new, independent Civic Information Consortium hosted by the University of Oregon, with a mandate to dedicate grants toward small community news organizations and startups in news deserts.

This bill would be a critical first step in helping rebuild Oregon's local news ecosystem by creating a level playing field with Big Tech. That's why we respectfully urge your support.

Signed,

[listed alphabetically]

Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association

Oregon Public Broadcasting

Oregon Society of Professional Journalists

Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild (TNG-CWA Local #37082)

News/Media Alliance

Rebuild Local News

University of Oregon's Agora Journalism Center