

Senator Kayse Jama
Chair, Senate Rules Committee
Oregon State Senate
900 Court Street NorthEast, S-223
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Jama:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our view on SB 686. Journalism, especially local journalism, is important to the fabric of our free society, and as such merits support from a variety of stakeholders. However, while well intentioned, we strongly believe that SB 686 takes the wrong approach, does not protect local journalism, and has numerous unintended consequences.

As part of our mission to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible, we have long been key supporters of the information ecosystem, and are one of the world's largest financial supporters of journalism. Our products link people to publishers' websites more than 24 billion times each month — for free — and we offer subscription tools and ad technology to help publishers efficiently monetize this traffic.

While we are committed to playing our part in strengthening local journalism and the news ecosystem in Oregon, we believe that SB 686 will ultimately harm the news industry it seeks to support:

- There is no provision in the legislation that would prevent the majority of funding from going to out-of-state publishers, not Oregon publishers and journalists. Furthermore, the legislation will likely support multi-national hedge funds, and other media conglomerates that have been the most significant cause of newsroom job cuts and the loss of journalism due to their draconian cost cutting measures impacting news outlets across the state.
- Mandating payment for simply linking to websites contradicts the foundational principles of the web that allow information to be discovered and shared freely. This sets a harmful precedent that ultimately risks reducing Oregonian's access to diverse new sources, contrary to the bill's intent.

- The legislation is fraught with Constitutional and other legal concerns, including violations of the First Amendment and Article I, section 8 of the Oregon Constitution, the Dormant Commerce Clause, and federal copyright preemption;
- As noted in submitted testimony, passage of this legislation will stifle traffic currently being driven to local media outlets, having the opposite effect of this bill's objectives.

We hope the Oregon legislature will reconsider the approach taken by SB 686, and work with all stakeholders to find a balanced and reasonable path forward to support Oregon news publishers, focused on serving Oregonians. We ask the Committee to oppose SB 686.

Respectfully,

William Floyd

William Floyd
Senior Director, Government Affairs and Public Policy
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Cc:

Senator Daniel Bonham, Vice Chair, Senate Rules Committee