

Submitter: Clayton Franke  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB686

Good afternoon Chair Jama, Vice Chair Bonham, and Members of the Senate Rules Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Clayton Franke. I'm a reporter at The Bulletin and a union member of the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild. I'm writing in strong support of Senate Bill 686.

I care about Senate Bill 686 because I graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Oregon in 2022 and began working in Eastern Oregon shortly after. I came to The Bulletin last June because I wanted to join a talented staff of reporters, photographers and editors committed to local journalism. A few hours into my first day at the paper, its former owner announced plans to sell the company and lay off 15% of its staff, including people in the newsroom at The Bulletin.

As a young reporter, it felt like stepping into a dark tunnel with no light at the end.

Senate Bill 686 provides a glimmer of hope.

The bill preserves and bolsters jobs for local journalists. Bend and Central Oregon are growing rapidly. People need local news to understand how the world around them is changing. We are the ones telling that story.

I want to share our alarm at hearing outsiders' calls to exclude Carpenter Media journalists like us from any potential damages claimed from Google and Meta under the bill.

As local journalists who live, work and serve in Oregon's communities, we unionized exactly so we could bargain for fair working conditions from employers like Carpenter – or whoever owns our newsroom. But money that's wrongfully taken from our newsrooms by Big Tech is money we can't claw back for wages at the bargaining table. It's our own work that's being exploited for profit by these trillion-dollar platforms. But we can't bargain or go on strike against Google.

We urge lawmakers to reject unfair and anti-worker demands to exclude unionized journalists like us from this bill and undermine our right to fight for fair treatment.

I ask for your support of Senate Bill 686.