



Friday April, 11

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Bonham and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Society of Professional Journalists represent journalists across Oregon, and we respectfully urge you to vote yes on Senate Bill 686.

This bill is about supporting Oregon jobs and communities. And it's about fairness. People have started using the phrase "plagiarism machine" to describe how Big Tech profits from the work of journalists, because the dynamic exploits journalists' work without compensation. It also hurts digital newsrooms' ability to employ local Oregon journalists to serve their communities.

To be clear, this bill is not a tax, a bailout or a government program. Rather, this bill establishes a structure for Big Tech to provide fair compensation for journalists' work that they exploit.

To SPJ, that principle of fairness should apply equitably to our members and the broader community of Oregon journalists. **We would respectfully urge you to reject the arguments you've heard that the Legislature should amend this bill to give a discriminatory free pass to Big Tech when it exploits the work of Oregon journalists whose news outlet happens to be owned by an out-of-state company.**

Oregon journalists serve our communities. We live, work and pay taxes in Oregon. We attend journalistic trainings and help each other to provide Oregonians with the best information possible. And we do so regardless of whether our respective news organization happens to have an out-of-state parent corporation or ownership.

Despite suggestions to contrary, **this bill is explicitly written to incentivize local jobs for reporters working in Oregon, as opposed to funding corporate bottom lines.** The math is simple: if companies cut reporter jobs in Oregon, their level of compensation from this bill declines. The incentive is to continue employing journalists to serve Oregon communities.

You've also heard that this bill leaves out small publishers. To be clear, the nonprofit Civic Information Consortium would receive important funding under this bill to serve small publishers and work to fill other gaps. The funding would also serve as seed money to help the consortium engage in separate fundraising to increase its efforts, grantmaking and impact.

In conclusion, you've heard talking points spread by Big Tech and its allies to support their position on this bill. You've heard about "experiments" publicized by Big Tech that support the notion that Big Tech doesn't "need" news and would try to punish newsrooms and Oregonians in response to this bill.

Regarding these fear tactics, we'd pose a simple question: If these threats represent how Big Tech addresses the question of fair compensation, does that sound like a fair relationship to you?

Thank you for your service. Please support Oregon communities and the journalists who work to inform them. Vote yes on SB 686.

Yours,

Nick Budnick, board member on behalf of the Oregon Society of Professional Journalists