

Senator Jama, Senator Bonham and members of the committee, thank you for allowing my testimony today in support of SB 686. I am Jeremy Groh, General Manager for the five central Oregon radio stations of Combined Communications. I've had the privilege of working in this industry for nearly 30-years.

In the morning when I arrive at the radio stations, or in the evening when I depart, I am sure to see a journalist from our news department, chasing interviews, fact-checking leads and headlines, or updating our station websites and social media accounts for the benefit of our local community. Each of these journalistic professionals represents a central Oregon family, the MC for the upcoming charity fundraiser, the mentor for the next generation of journalists and broadcasters, the coach of the neighborhood little league team.

Change and competition have always been inexorable facets of the media landscape. With hard work and dedication, these challenges have been, to differing degrees, surmountable obstacles. Make no mistake however, what our local journalists currently face, is an outright assault.

Over the years, we've witnessed the product (the stories) of print and broadcast journalists migrate to online platforms, in order to remain visible and relevant. Unfortunately, this evolution has delivered our efforts on a silver platter, to those that would repackage our newswriting as their own. Omitting attribution, diminishing reach for our local advertisers, slashing operating budgets, and eroding the overall size and capabilities of local newsrooms.

We can and have adapted to compete against streaming services that play music. We've survived satellite radio, podcasts and the YouTubes of the world that host news and commentary. The difference in this instance, is that big tech is now taking our locally produced news product and presenting it as their own. Effectively harvesting our crops in the night, leaving us emptyhanded at sunrise. I submit that SB 686 will help ensure that our local newsrooms maintain the ability to compensate our local journalists for serving our local community. Thank you.