

To: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Re: Support of SB 1580
Date: February 10, 2026
Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Drazan, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for Senate Bill 1580.

I am Troy Heie, editor at the Rogue Valley Times, which is based in Medford and serves readers in Jackson and Josephine counties.

We marked our third year of publication earlier this month, and since our inception, we've been providing local residents with critical news coverage, watchdog reporting and investigative reporting that has garnered us statewide journalism awards. We also write about cultural and community events, arts and entertainment and plenty of prep and collegiate athletics.

Unfortunately, the largest, international technology companies are using our news content without fair compensation, which has created a disturbing, existential threat for our newspaper, our journalists, and our community.

The Rogue Valley Times has a small and dedicated staff, but we need more reporters to cover more public meetings and community events.

SB 1580, which would require big tech to pay a stipend per journalist across newsrooms in Oregon, is critical. With its passage, the Rogue Valley Times could avoid any future layoffs, hire a new reporter and invest in more investigative and watchdog work.

When newsrooms close, Oregonians lose. And make no mistake, we are on a losing path: civic participation is declining, misinformation is spreading, and public trust is weakening. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity to stop the bleeding and reinvest in our newsrooms.

SB 1580 is a fair and necessary step to restore the conditions in which local journalism – and democracy – can thrive.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Troy Heie
Editor
Rogue Valley Times