

Testimony in support of SB 1580

I'm writing to ask for support for SB 1580, legislation being brought forward again by Senator Khanh Pham, to support Oregon newspapers.

Within our own company, you would help sustain more than 50 Oregon journalism jobs, the same people who have been working at those community newspapers for anywhere from a few years to as much as three decades. Your support would also open the door for our newsrooms to hire more reporters in the future.

This bill is critically important to all Oregon media, and especially to local news organizations like ours. Without these news publications, Eastern Oregon would be a vast news desert comprising half our state, and several Oregon communities, as well as entire counties, that would lack a local news source. This bill would require large technology platforms to compensate news organizations for using our reporting to drive their own advertising revenue.

If passed, this bill would be a huge support to local journalism throughout Oregon. The funds generated would put our company in a position to add staff and increase our news coverage for communities throughout Oregon. In fact, the legislation requires that 90 percent of the proceeds go to journalists and staff serving more than 35 Oregon communities.

Google has already acknowledged the value of newspaper content by paying news organizations in two countries and multiple U.S. states. Until big tech is required to do the same in Oregon, these platforms will continue to profit from the work of struggling local newsrooms without fair compensation.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of the important role trusted local news can play in creating a stronger Oregon.

Sincerely,

Jody Lawrence-Turner,
Oregon Content Editor, CMGO-CMGEO