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On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1580

Robust local journalism is of fundamental importance for a robustly functional democracy. I am writing today in support of SB 1580: The Oregon Journalism Protection Act, an important bill that will protect Oregon jobs, empower local communities, defend democracy, and demand fair compensation from big tech.

The Problem: Mega tech platforms extract profit from local news without permission. While our local newsrooms struggle, tech titans rake in billions.

Mega digital platforms like Google are acting like a “plagiarism machine” that profits from news content without fairly compensating newsrooms. Other jurisdictions have developed anti-trust legislation to address this problem. Oregon must act now!

When Newsrooms Close, Oregonians Lose. Over the past 18 years, 27% of the state's newspapers have closed, leaving many communities with limited or no access to reliable local news. Closures and layoffs in newsrooms harm Oregonians, cost jobs in journalism, and harm our civic life.

The Solution: The Oregon Journalism Protection Act (SB 1580) requires large platforms to fairly compensate Oregon news publishers. Inspired by successful models in Canada, Australia, New Jersey, and California, this bill rebalances the market and reinvests in Oregon’s local journalism.

Key Provisions of SB 1580:

Returns Fair Share of Revenue Directly to Oregon Newsrooms

Covered platforms must pay a fair share of news content revenue, to be determined through arbitration:

- * Payments are distributed based on the number of journalists employed – not impressions or clicks – incentivizing news providers to keep their newsrooms fully staffed, or even grow.
- * At least 90% of funds received must go directly to newsroom staff that create news content for an Oregon audience.
- * Annual reporting is required to track spending and ensure transparency.
- * News organizations can choose to make a claim for direct payments or apply for a grant, depending on what they decide will best support their unique situation.

Establishes the Nonprofit Oregon Civic Information Consortium to Make Grants for Local Publications and Media Makers

* A new nonprofit housed at the University of Oregon will make grants to support local journalism —especially for micro and startup publications and media projects in underserved communities, rural areas, and ethnic media outlets.

I hope that you will support SB 1580 along with many Oregonians who are committed to protecting Oregon journalism, including Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB), Fund for Oregon Rural Journalism (FORJ), Oregon Association of Broadcasters, Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association (ONPA), and Indivisible Oregon (COIN).