



February 11, 2026

The Honorable Mark Meek
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce
and General Government
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Christine Drazan
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on
Commerce and General Government
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oppose SB 1580 – Forced Payments to News Content Providers

Dear Chair Meeks, Vice Chair Drazan, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of Chamber of Progress, a tech industry association supporting public policies to build a society in which all people benefit from technological advances, I **respectfully urge you to oppose SB 1580**, which would require covered platforms like Google to enter into paid agreements with Oregon news providers, under the threat of forced arbitration, for displaying original summaries of the facts underlying the breaking news of the day.

We share the belief that “a free and diverse fourth estate was critical in the founding of American democracy and continues to be the lifeblood of a functional democratic society, and communities without local news lose touch with government, business, education, and neighbors.” However, SB 1580 explicitly claims, and then expresses through presumptive statute, that court decisions involving entirely different product markets mean that Google somehow has a monopoly on the reporting on the material facts that form the basis of this fourth estate. This is simply not true.

There is nothing preventing Oregon news customers from accessing the content created by Oregon news providers through a variety of other means and channels of information, other than that they are simply choosing not to.

In years prior, customers paid a subscription service to receive a physical daily delivery of a newspaper to their place of residence. When this became less economically feasible, due to declining customer demand for physical print media, many newspapers moved online, some exclusively so—and successfully so. These same newspapers used to also sell classified and personal ads in exchange for readership, but when that readership dried up, and when more efficient online alternatives like Craigslist or Facebook

Marketplace, or any one of the many dating or service apps became more commonplace and efficient, these business customers also moved elsewhere. Phonebooks no longer exist in a physical form, either for the same reasons.

There are new models of local and regional journalism that work

Many news organizations have embraced a fully subscription-based model to deliver local news, including Santa Cruz Local in my hometown—no ads, the Alameda Post (which serves the small island of less than 80,000 people off the coast of Oakland), and now Lookout Eugene/Springfield. Some of these publications do have local ads, some are nonprofit and entirely subscription-driven, and others provide a daily email digest covering things like local politics and high school sports, etc. But the number of publications that cover local news like this is growing, and shifting with the times and economics of today.

SB 1580 is not Oregon-focused, even though its effects would be felt primarily by Oregonians

SB 1580 is drafted to apply to an exceptionally narrow set of entities. The bill's definition of a "covered platform" requires at least 50 million monthly active users in the United States and ties coverage to a parent corporation meeting extraordinarily high revenue or market capitalization thresholds, or to a global use base of at least one billion monthly active users. As a result, the bill is effectively aimed at only a handful of the largest technology companies, most of which are headquartered outside Oregon.

Despite this narrow targeting, the consequences of the bill would not be confined to those companies. By seeking to regulate how covered platforms may distribute, display, or make content available, SB 1580 would directly affect how Oregon residents access news and information and how Oregon publishers reach their audiences online. In practice, SB 1580 would use the Oregon legislative process to influence national platform behavior, while placing the practical risks of disruption on Oregon users, Oregon publishers, and Oregon's broader information environment.

SB 1580 risks harming local journalism if platforms are forced to limit links and distribution

SB 1580 is structured effectively as a link tax by tying the distribution and display of news content to payment obligations. This creates a strong incentive for covered platforms to reduce their exposure by restricting how news is linked, shared, or surfaced. As a result, there would be reduced visibility for journalism, especially for smaller, independent outlets that depend heavily on search and social media referral traffic to reach readers.

This is not hypothetical. This has already happened in Canada, where traffic to smaller publications has been disastrous.¹ Additionally, this would stifle the free flow of information, making it difficult for the public to access diverse news sources and perspectives. The bill will inadvertently hinder the very industry it aims to protect by creating barriers to the dissemination of news in an increasingly digital world.

Expression of materials facts is protected speech

Proponents of this bill claim that covered platforms steal “access” to news providers’ content in two ways:

1. By scraping or crawling their sites before then linking back to the source material, but websites can explicitly opt out of being listed if they so choose. And yet none of them do, which is an implicit admission that the internet traffic they derive from being listed is of such paramount importance to their readership that it vastly outweighs the value that news readers would otherwise get from organically visiting those same sites.
2. By synthesizing the material facts of a given article and then summarizing those facts within the top bar, a process that is aided by the use of artificial intelligence. A myriad of existing court cases that deal with the nature of AI, verifiable information, and protected speech have reaffirmed that the holder of a copyright on a news article does not own the underlying material facts in that article, *like a sports score*. When an AI transforms the underlying facts into a genuinely new output, like an editorial summary, the new expression is protected speech.

In conclusion, this bill, as written, would force a single covered platform, Google, whose value to news readers and business advertisers far outweighs that of the older newspaper business models, to compensate news providers for a process they need not participate in, at the expense of new viable models of local journalism. OR, face forced arbitration and enforcement only by and in the State of Oregon.

Furthermore, if this bill were to become law, there is nothing stopping Google from only making a deal with a select few publications, whilst ignoring all others, effectively picking winners and losers, at the direct behest of the state legislature. Finally, this bill imposes on Google a duty to transact with various websites that is inconsistent with the First Amendment, as it acts as a differential taxation on a particular speaker, and is a presumptively unconstitutional content based law.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **oppose SB 1580**.

Sincerely,

¹ Jeff Jarvis. “This is No Way to Save the News.” Medium, Jun. 13, 2024.
<https://medium.com/whither-news/this-is-no-way-to-content-basedsave-the-news-698ea9e5abf9>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert" followed by a surname starting with "S".

Robert Singleton
Senior Director of Policy and Public Affairs, California and US West