

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

Chair and committee members,

SB 1580 – aims to address the decline of local journalism by requiring tech platforms to share advertising revenue with news organizations whose content they distribute. The bill specifically references Google and Meta’s alleged monopolistic practices and their impact on local news outlets (18 Oregon outlets closed 2022-2025). SB 1580 aims to force social media companies into certain hamstrung agreements with Oregon media businesses. It would bind them to arbitration and the threat of huge fines, by the millions, if they do not comply.

The issue of the rights of online use of online news content should be decided by clearly defined laws and court cases where everyone is allowed full participation in the process. Outsourcing decision making and tax-imposing powers upon other non-governmental entities is a terrible undemocratic and unaccountable system destined to fail. The fact that this complicated issue is being rushed through the super-fast 35-day Legislative Session with no official bill analysis provided the day before the hearing for this extremely complicated matter, is an example of critical decisions being made with the least amount of input and involvement of all parties involved. It is a shadow of the bad decisions to come.

Main Requirements:

“Covered platforms” (tech companies with 50M+ US users and \$550B+ revenue/market cap) must have written agreements to access Oregon news content
Platforms must pay digital journalism providers for content aggregation
70% of funds received must be spent on journalists and support staff.

Enforcement Mechanisms:

Civil lawsuits – News providers can sue for \$1,000 per unauthorized access or actual damages

Arbitration process – Determines percentage of platform ad revenue owed to news providers

Two-year exemption (2027-2028) – Platforms can pay fixed amounts (\$104M for larger platforms, \$18M for smaller) to avoid lawsuits.

Oregon Civic Information Consortium:

Receives 10% of all platform payments

Governed by 13-member board

Awards grants to support local journalism and civic information projects

Thank you