



Oregon Public Broadcasting
7140 S Macadam Avenue Portland, OR 97219
503.977.7799 opb.org

February 12, 2026

Testimony to and in reference to:

Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government

RE: SB 1580 (*Prohibits an online news aggregating platform from accessing for an Oregon audience the online content of a digital journalism provider without an agreement.*)

Dear Chair Meek, Vice Chair Drazan, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the board and staff of Oregon Public Broadcasting, we strongly endorse the passage of SB 1580.

This bill comes at a critical time for the journalism ecosystem in Oregon. In recent years, we've been distressed to see huge contractions in the journalism sector through cutbacks, closures, and consolidation by out-of-state owners. OPB's reporting in 2024 found that in Oregon, newspaper employment had dwindled to 1,586 people in 2022, from a high of over 10,000 in 2006.

We see an opportunity for this bill to reverse some of these troubling trends.

Most importantly, this is an issue of fairness. These massive online platforms continue to profit by scraping and reusing news content—stories carefully gathered by on-the-ground reporters—without fairly compensating the newsrooms and journalists who create it.

AI summarization of news articles has only accelerated this process. These huge platforms benefit greatly by using the knowledge created by human journalists, but choose not to compensate them for doing so.

Other online platforms have already made fair deals with news content providers – showing that a shared revenue model is workable. These larger platforms should do the same and do right by Oregon's journalists, news organizations, and the communities that rely on them.

Our position on this bill arises from our history serving communities all across the state of Oregon, and our core organizational values. OPB is an independent, nonprofit organization driven by our mission: **Connecting people across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest through the power of a shared story.**

We have deep roots here, starting in 1922 as a physics experiment in AM radio on the campus of what was then Oregon Agricultural College.

We serve as the state's most accessible source of trusted, carefully vetted news and information, with news bureaus based in Bend and Pendleton, and in-depth reporting across a wide range of topics such as education, business, and health care. Our teams from programs such as Oregon Field Guide and Oregon Experience regularly visit and share stories from communities all across the state.



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OPB provides our stories to news organizations free of charge and shares stories from partners via our website, radio service, and newsletters. We seek to connect more people with important stories wherever they might get their news.

Last year, Congress eliminated federal funding for public media. We're extremely fortunate that people across this region stepped up to support us, and that OPB's voluntary membership model has proven resilient. With generous support from OPB members—located in every single county of Oregon—we're continuing to expand our public service journalism as the needs only continue to grow.

Even with federal funding gone, our public media value of universal access is as strong as ever. **OPB's trusted reporting is available free of charge to everyone in our state—not behind a paywall.** With these challenges in mind, funding through SB 1580 would be a major boost to OPB's ability to serve the public with trusted information.

But the broader impacts on our state's journalism community really drive the need for this bill. OPB is better able to serve our mission when our peers have the sustainable footing to do great journalism, and our whole state benefits when more voices are part of the conversation. This bill is a meaningful step to reverse the trend and ensure fair compensation to help journalists continue to do that essential work.

Thank you for carefully considering this important bill, and for supporting a strong future for informed, connected communities across Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Smolkin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Rachel" on the top line and "Smolkin" on the bottom line.

Rachel Smolkin
OPB President and CEO