

12 February 2026

Attn: **Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government**

Re: **SB 1580-2**

I am writing to confirm my support for SB 1580, The Oregon Journalism Protection Act.

Local journalism is absolutely critical for a healthy democracy. In the current climate of 24-cable news networks and AI summaries we never asked for and can't turn off, it is easy to feel like we have access to so much, sometimes too much, information; but without robust local journalism and newsrooms, Oregonians will not be able to access the information that we need to be responsible citizens and neighbors. In the last 18 years, 27% of our state newspapers have closed. With AI summaries suddenly adding an additional layer of separation between the consumer and the actual source of that news and on-the-ground effort, more than ever local journalism and newsrooms are in crisis. I believe that SB 1580 will help ensure that our communities can support stable and reliable newsrooms.

Google is currently profiting off local journalism without compensating the journalists and publications for the critical work that they are doing for our communities. As Senator Pham stated so simply: "this is about restitution for a theft." Though I am disappointed by the exclusion of Meta platforms from the -2 amendment, I believe that the amendment addresses valid concerns by narrowing the focus. If Google is truly proud of the work they are doing in driving and supporting local news dissemination, they would be happy to pay the journalists who are doing the work they are selling and we would not need this bill. They aren't, so we do.

As we see more and more attacks on journalism, both here in Oregon and throughout the country, it is more important now than ever to ensure that there is funding and support for journalists in *all* of our communities, no matter how large or small.

To quote what once was a beacon of the fourth estate: *democracy dies in darkness*. By ensuring compensation for local journalists when their work is monetized by online entities, and creating the Oregon Civic Information Consortium to provide funding for digital news providers in Oregon and for Oregon, SB 1580 will help shine light in spaces and communities in our great state that are struggling.

Thank you,

Tegan O'Brien

Eugene, OR