



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 3, 2013

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House passes social media privacy protection for students

SB 344A prevents higher education institutions from demanding access to social media accounts

SALEM – Today the Oregon House of Representatives passed legislation to protect the privacy rights of college students. Senate Bill 344A would prevent colleges and universities from demanding access to the private social media pages maintained by current students or applicants.

“As social networking sites grow in popularity, we need to make sure that students are confident that their personal pages are protected,” said Representative Margaret Doherty (D – Tigard), who championed the bill along with Senators Ginny Burdick (D – Portland) and Bruce Starr (R – Hillsboro). “It’s unacceptable for colleges to access a student’s private information, just as it would be inappropriate for them to demand access to a diary or other personal notes.”

Doherty also worked to expand social media privacy for Oregon's workers this session. House Bill 2654B, which prevents employers from requiring employees or applicants to provide access to their social media accounts, was recently signed by Governor Kitzhaber.

Under SB 344A, colleges and universities are still able to investigate reports of illegal activity by compelling a student to share specific information. The legislation won support from a broad coalition including higher education institutions, privacy advocates, and students’ rights groups.

“Many students are choosing to share more of their personal information online, but they still have the right to privacy,” House Majority Leader Val Hoyle (D – Eugene) said. “We need to make sure that students don’t lose their rights simply because they are growing up with the changing realities of new media.”

SB 344A passed the House and Senate with strong bipartisan support and now heads to the Governor for his signature.

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