

JANEEN SOLLMAN
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 15



OREGON STATE SENATE

June 25, 2025

Obadiah Rutledge
Secretary of the Senate

RE: Vote Explanation for Senate Bill 686 B

Dear Secretary Rutledge,

I am writing to formally explain my no vote on Senate Bill 686 B, the Oregon Journalism Protection Act. While I deeply appreciate the sponsor's commitment to addressing Oregon's local journalism crisis and recognize the urgent need for policy solutions, I could not support the legislation as amended. My concern is the potential harm it will cause the very communities and independent outlets it seeks to help, and the on-going litigation.

Local journalism in Oregon faces an undeniable crisis. The University of Oregon's Agora Journalism Center reports that nearly 30% of Oregon's newspapers were sold to out-of-state owners in 2024, meaning nearly half of our state's remaining newspapers are now controlled by national media conglomerates. Meanwhile, independent community newsrooms, nonprofit outlets, and ethnic media organizations struggle with minimal resources despite being best positioned to serve their communities' information needs.

This structural imbalance demands thoughtful policy intervention. However, I feel that SB 686 B's approach would likely exacerbate, rather than solve these fundamental problems. This bill, despite its admirable intentions, would likely result in reduced access to local news as platforms block content, prolonged litigation while pressing problems remain unaddressed, windfall benefits for distant corporate entities rather than Oregon-based journalism, and minimal support for the community outlets our residents most need.

My concerns are reinforced by testimony from multiple stakeholders. Particularly compelling were perspectives shared by local media operators who expressed skepticism that platforms will pay the required fees, predicting instead that they will pursue lengthy court battles while simultaneously reducing the visibility of local news content to Oregon audiences. I heard concerns that any collected revenue would primarily flow to out-of-state companies backed by venture capital and private equity rather than supporting genuine Oregon-based journalism.

Oregon's local journalism crisis demands urgent, thoughtful action. However, we must ensure our solutions strengthen rather than undermine the independent outlets best positioned to serve

JANEEN SOLLMAN
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 15



OREGON STATE SENATE

our communities. The goal must be strengthening local, independent journalism that serves Oregon communities, not enriching corporate shareholders in other states. For these reasons, I voted no on SB 686 B.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janeen Sollman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Janeen Sollman
Senate District 15