



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Social media privacy wins workplace protection in Senate vote

HB 2654B prohibits current and prospective employers from demanding access to social media accounts

SALEM – The Oregon Senate today passed a bipartisan bill designed to protect the privacy rights of employees and job applicants. House Bill 2654B, which passed on a 28-1 vote with one excused, prohibits a current or prospective employer from demanding access to a private social media page, such as Facebook, as a condition of employment.

“Employees and applicants have a right to keep their professional and personal lives separate,” said Senator Ginny Burdick (D-Portland), a sponsor of the bill. “This bill draws a clear line for the working world by allowing employees to keep their accounts private, without intrusion from management.”

In addition to prohibiting access to a personal social network as a workplace requirement, the bill disallows retaliation based on an employee or applicant’s refusal to disclose information. HB 2654B does not restrict employers’ ability to access information that is otherwise publicly available.

“Supervisors don’t have the right to rifle through their employees’ journals and diaries. Why should this be any different?” said Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward (D-Beaverton). “Today’s vote reaffirms the idea that people can keep their personal information private, even in a digital form.”

In April, the Senate passed SB 344A, a similar bill that restricts colleges and universities from compelling a student to share social media account information as a condition of admission or enrollment.

“Job applicants should have a fair shot to get hired, and private social media accounts shouldn’t be a part of the process,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “This bill helps Oregonians get back to work by allowing them to compete for jobs based on their qualifications.”

House Bill 2654B now returns to the Oregon House of Representatives for a concurrence motion.

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