

Senator Jackie Winters

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Anti-patent troll legislation receives hearing

Salem, OR - The Senate Judiciary Committee heard testimony Tuesday morning in support of a bill to crack down on "patent trolls" who try to extort money out of small Oregon businesses.

"Oregon small businesses have plenty of challenges without worrying about extortion scams," said Senator Jackie Winters (R-Salem), who introduced [Senate Bill 1540](#) after being notified by a constituent about the issue. "This type of harassment is something we should actively and aggressively discourage."

Patent trolls are companies that purchase patents and intimidate thousands of individuals and small businesses with the threat of a lawsuit. The aim is to extort cash from companies or individuals in order to make the threat of litigation go away.

Senate Bill 1540 would make patent trolling a violation of the Oregon's Unlawful Trade Practices Act. The bill would also allow those who have been targeted by a patent troll to sue for attorneys' fees.

"It's a bad practice, and I think citizens and small businesses of this state should not have to feel like they're getting these demand letters for no reason, and then it ends up costing them an unnecessary amount of money," Winters said.

Winters is a retired small business owner and has served in the state legislature since 1998, when she was elected to the House of Representatives. She was elected to the Senate in 2002.

Jackie has lived in Salem for 43 years.

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