

February 5, 2024

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly:

Subject: Vote Yes on SB 1502.

Thank you for your consideration of my opinion on this bill. As a reminder, the digest of this bill is, *“Requires public schools and college boards to live stream their meetings and post the meeting recordings on their websites and social media sites. This does not apply if a meeting is private. Allows remote testimony for most school and college board meetings.”*

This bill enshrines into law many of the practices already done by the University of Oregon. I am so grateful that board meetings are live-streamed and recorded. I watch every one online, and it has been invaluable in helping me understand the priorities and decisions being made by the public body closest to my day-to-day life.

While I think this bill is fine to be passed as-is, there are a few changes about this bill I'd like to see:

1. I would like there to be somewhat different language around Section 2.(2).(b), which right now reads, *“Within seven days following the meeting, post a video or audio recording of the meeting on the public body’s website or social media site.”*

I don't care where the recording is hosted – official website, social media account, on the board chair's personal computer, my grandma's cell phone, wherever – so long as I, a member of the public, can easily, and without cost, find and watch/listen to the proceedings online. I think this language does that by specifying “website” or “social media,” but I do wonder if alternative clarifying language could be inserted to ensure any links to the livestream and recording are reasonably findable on a website, so that these meetings aren't buried deep in some nearly hidden corner of the web or, worse, put behind a login screen which makes it difficult for the public to access.

As a hypothetical, consider the following: I do not use Facebook. Facebook requires visitors to their website to sign up for an account to view most content. If a school board uploaded the video of their board meeting to a Facebook page, a social media site, they would be in compliance with this legislation. But I, a member of the public, may not be able to see it without creating a Facebook account, which I am loathe to do. Clarifying that the recording must be reasonably findable and accessible – that is, without the user having to navigate through multiple links/pages, going through a paywall, or signing up for an account – would make this bill even better.

2. It is my understanding that information sessions for board members, as well as meetings of committees or subcommittees of the governing body, would not required to post recordings of discussions. I think the bill should clarify that information sessions for, and (sub)committee meetings by, the governing body ought to also be posted online. Imagine if the legislature only recorded the floor proceedings and failed to stream committee meetings!
3. Often, boards read a packet of materials prepared by staff beforehand. These written materials should also be posted online somewhere, except for the information discussed in executive sessions.
4. The go-to definition for public universities in most legislation, including in this bill, is ORS 352.002, which does not include OHSU. I believe that OHSU should be included here.

Once again, I am so pleased by this bill, and I encourage its passage – either as introduced or with some of the changes suggested above.

Sincerely,



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