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MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair Floyd Prozanski
Vice Chair Betsy Close
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Laurie Hieb, ONPA Executive Director

DATE: February 5, 2014

RE: Concerns with SB 1536

I am writing to express the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association's concerns with SB 1536.

The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association (ONPA) is a trade association composed of weekly and daily paid-circulation newspapers serving large cities and small communities across the state. It is organized to represent common interests of Oregon newspapers, to promote the value of newspaper advertising, and to further the public's understanding that strong newspapers are the cornerstone of a democratic society.

At first glance, SB 1536 appears to be primarily a housekeeping measure, however there is one change that is cause for concern to our membership – the elimination of “date of birth” from public information to “age.” Many crimes under Oregon law have charges tied directly to the age of the alleged offender. For this reason it becomes of public interest if the offender is 1 day, or 364 days away from reaching one of those “cutoff” ages for a crime. At times, the date of birth can play a role in judicial determination of whether a juvenile might be charged as an adult in certain circumstances.

An individual's date of birth is a readily available piece of information, and not normally considered something of a personal nature that requires confidentiality. Since media reports about people accused of crimes require accurate information to avoid confusion with another individual, a DOB can be something that avoids that mis-identification.

We do not believe there is significant value to making this change in ORS, and that the public interest is better served by retaining date of birth as accessible information under these laws.

Thank you for your consideration and please let me know if you have any questions.