

I am writing to you as a concerned Oregonian based in Corvallis and board member of Hindus for Human Rights, standing alongside India Civil Watch International and Indian American Muslim Council, calling on the Oregon Legislature to pass the Treasury Transparency Bill.

In 2017, the state of Oregon invested \$233 million in Novalpina, the private equity firm that later acquired a controlling stake in the NSO Group. This makes the state of Oregon's pension fund the largest indirect investor in a company whose Pegasus spyware has targeted hundreds of human rights defenders around the world.

The NSO Group's Pegasus software is capable of breaking into a smartphone, extracting files, and even turning on the microphone and camera without the user's permission. In India, the Hindu nationalist government of Narendra Modi has deployed Pegasus spyware to target dozens of leading human rights defenders, students, lawyers, journalists, and opposition politicians. Forensic investigations have shown that activist Rona Wilson's phone was infected with Pegasus software a year before his arrest in 2018. Following the revelations of the Pegasus Project, the Press Club of India stated that "This is the first time in the history of this country that all pillars of our democracy — judiciary, Parliamentarians, media, executives & ministers — have been spied upon." India's Supreme Court has since ordered an independent inquiry into the Modi government's use of Pegasus.

Here in the United States, the Biden administration blacklisted the NSO Group in November 2021, describing Pegasus as a "tool of repression." Several members of Congress, including Oregon's own Senator Ron Wyden have called on the Treasury and State Departments to apply sanctions to the NSO Group under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.

Surveillance technologies such as Pegasus software threaten our shared human rights, no matter where we live. I am appalled that the tax dollars of Oregonians have been invested in a company that has enabled human rights abuses in India and worldwide.

The Treasury only shares about half of their investment holdings on an annual basis on the Oregon Investment Council (OIC) website. I urge the Oregon Legislature to pass the Treasury Transparency Bill (HB4115) to shine a light on the holdings of the Oregon Treasury, which manages \$130 billion of our money.

In addition, we urge State Treasurer Tobias Read and the Oregon Investment Council to immediately divest pension funds from NSO – a demand that has been made by Senator Wyden as well. The Oregon Investment Council should also implement a "human rights procurement screening" for all its investments, and especially for the public employee pension fund.