



**COALITION OF  
OREGON SCHOOL  
ADMINISTRATORS**



February 7, 2023

TO: Senate Committee on Rules

FR: Richard Donovan on behalf of OSBA and Parasa Chanramy on behalf of COSA

RE: SB 417, SB 160 Testimony

Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, members of the committee:

On behalf of the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) and the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators (COSA), we write to express concern with SB 417, SB 160, and with broad discounts on public records requests generally.

School districts and ESDs operate under a great number of public records requirements, including the maintenance and protection of student and employee records. Much of this information is protected under state and federal law, and law sometimes requires storage and protection of records for decades. The volume of potential records has exploded in recent years with the advent of e-mail and other electronic communications.

The concern with SB 160, and certain parts of SB 417, is that any discount to public records requests effectively moves money from school district services to news media. Reducing public records fees will not change the cost to school districts to comply with the requests. Rather, it will mean school districts will not be able to bill for all costs, so these costs will have to come from services, potentially including employee salary, instructional time, and other direct services to students.

Further concern with SB 417 stems from proposed changes to the definitions of “news media” and “representative of the news media.” These definitions would broaden the number of people eligible for the discounts described in SB 160 and other parts of SB 417. This, again, places the cost burden and increased work on school districts, and this cost could likely come from other education services in the district.

It is also worth noting that, from the school district perspective, there is currently no lack of journalistic or news media access to school district activities across Oregon’s public K-12 schools. Schools are required under statute to deliver extensive reporting. School employees are public employees that bargain locally. Journalists are allowed to attend executive session meetings of school boards, including meetings that are not otherwise open to the public. And all our work product, unless it is otherwise protected, is available by public request. The cost of the records simply must be paid to keep public schools whole.

Thank you for your consideration. We urge you to amend SB 160, SB 417, or any similar bills to remove costs to public K-12 schools, ESDs, and community colleges. We are happy to answer any questions.

Richard Donovan  
Legislative Services Specialist  
Oregon School Boards Association  
[rdonovan@osba.com](mailto:rdonovan@osba.com)

Parasa Chanramy  
Legislative Director  
Coalition of Oregon School Administrators  
[parasa@cosa.k12.or.us](mailto:parasa@cosa.k12.or.us)