

Submitter: Caitlin Baggott Davis  
On Behalf Of: North Star Action Center  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure: HB2605

Chair Fahey and members of the Committee,

North Star supports HB 2605, to create a tax credit for contributions to publishers of local journalistic publications. North Star is a mission-directed organization focused on addressing threats to Oregon's civic life and democracy.

Journalism -- particularly locally owned and accountable journalism -- is essential to supporting civic engagement and our democratic system of governance. But over the last two decades we have seen seismic shifts in the ability of local news organizations to fulfill their commitments. This is because of significant changes in the traditional advertising and funding structures that have historically supported their work. Local papers are essential for informing the electorate, knitting together communities around current events and opportunities to be civically involved, and also for creating transparency and accountability for governments, businesses, and community leaders.

In an era of increasing distrust in government and business, we need trustworthy and credible sources of information more than ever. The loss of local coverage over the last two decades in Oregon has resulted in misinformation -- or no information! -- about wild fire safety, COVID-19, voting and elections, legislative process and progress on critical bills, local government decisions about schools, public investments, housing and planning. Without steady and credible information on these topics, Oregonians lose out both on access to processes and information, but also on a sense of belonging and the common spirit of civic life.

Thank you for your attention. Please support HB 2605.

Caitlin Baggott Davis, Executive Director