

Submitter: Barry Cohen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2605

To: Members of the House Committee on Rules

Date: February 10, 2023

Subject: Support HB 2605

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kroph, and members of the Committee,

My name is Barry Cohen, and I reside in Portland.

For part of my professional career, I was a journalist in Phoenix, Arizona. I learned first-hand how powerful the press can be with informing the public about vital information and perspectives that directly affect their lives.

I grew to love what is called “the fourth estate,” which plays a vital role in informing the people how the legislative, judicial and executive branches of government affect them. Without a strong fourth estate, the experiment we call democracy will be threatened.

This is why I support Protect Local Journalism, HB 2605.

Too many “news deserts” exist in Oregon, depriving the people of awareness of how government constructively and/or adversely affects them. In the past, local journalism have informed the people about government corruption, abuses and malfeasance. Currently, too many so-called news sources spread misinformation or disinformation and cause the people to distrust all levels of government and state/federal organizations.

In addition, we need a strong fourth estate to serve both the non-English speaking community and those who continue to be marginalized from the mainstream media.

Democracy depends upon the people trusting ideas, such as:

- Elections are fair.
- Governmental health advice can be trusted.
- The judicial system cannot be political.
- Fairly-elected officials represent all of the people, not just a selected few.

If trust in these ideas fail, democracy fails.

For these reasons, I urge your support for Protecting Local Journalism, and urge the measure be funded fully. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Barry Cohen