

Submitter: Will Yurman  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB686

Testimony in Favor of SB 686  
Will Yurman  
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I write in support of SB686. As a resident of Florence, I have seen the drastic reduction in local news first-hand. The Siuslaw News, a once thriving locally-owned newspaper, is no longer locally owned or thriving. The paper's reporting staff has been cut to a single journalist who doesn't live in the community. News coverage has been reduced in many instances to copying and pasting press releases.

Communities are better when there is a robust source for accurate news. People are better when they know who their neighbors are, when they can read or watch high school sports and see what events are happening in their community, and when they know what the local government has planned for their city or town.

Facebook has become a place of unmoderated rumors and comments that often descend into ugly name-calling. Facts become debatable. It is not the healthy public square a community needs, yet it feeds off the news and hard work of journalists.

SB686 is an opportunity to support a necessary pillar of each community in Oregon. Local news serves a vital role as a watchdog of government and business. It is the local journalist who attends school board and town meetings, who interviews the high school graduates on their hopes and dreams, and reports on the new restaurant or the retirement of the town veterinarian.

Asking companies to pay for what they have taken for free is the right thing to do.

I urge you to support the measure.