

Submitter: Rebecca Wallis
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB686

Chair Jama and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to SB 686.

As the Managing Editor of Yamhill County News, I run a fully independent digital news outlet based in Yamhill County. I investigate local government, report on elections and policy, and cover real issues that affect our community, all without paywalls, subscriptions, or subsidies. I believe in one thing: honest journalism, funded voluntarily by the people it serves.

SB 686 takes Oregon in the wrong direction. It proposes a system where tech platforms like Google and Meta are forced to subsidize select media companies, including legacy newspapers that have failed to maintain relevance or trust. This is not a free-market solution. It is a government-engineered wealth transfer, and it is being labeled “journalism support.”

However, journalism should never be propped up by government-mandated payments. It should be supported by readers who value it.

My concern goes beyond being excluded from the bill, although, as an independent outlet without 501(c)(3) status or six-figure revenue, I would receive nothing from SB 686’s compensation model. The deeper issue is that this bill fundamentally compromises the independence of the press. When the state creates funding pipelines, even indirectly, it risks distorting what news is published, which voices are amplified, and who is left behind.

If the public trusts a news outlet, they will support it. If they don’t, that outlet should be allowed to fail. That is how a free press should operate.

Awarding funding simply because of tax status and employee count is not journalism reform; it is a bailout for outdated institutions.

If we truly want to restore journalism in Oregon, we must restore credibility, competition, and trust. Those things will not come through government interference. They will come through empowering readers to choose which voices deserve to survive.

I respectfully urge you to vote no on SB 686. Journalism needs independence, not

entanglement.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Wallis
Managing Editor
Yamhill County News