

Submitter: Lisa Heyamoto
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB686

Hello, my name is Lisa Heyamoto. I'm an Oregonian, a career-long advocate for local journalism and the brand new owner/publisher of the Hollywood Star News in Northeast Portland. I have also worked for two prominent national nonprofits that support several hundred local, independently owned news organizations across the country and I'm here to speak in favor of Senate Bill 686.

I strongly believe that local news is a public good, and that its benefit to communities and the people who call them home goes far beyond the already crucial act of providing information. Local news allows us to understand ourselves, our neighbors and our communities. It makes us feel part of something bigger than ourselves. It connects us. It tells our collective story.

But local news is under significant threat, and if its existence is a public good, it follows that its absence is a public bad. We've seen that in the research, and in our own lived experiences. So it makes good sense that this public good be supported by public policy. Just as local news is the informational fuel for our communities, it's also the informational fuel for the internet, and I appreciate how this bill recognizes that.

Through my nonprofit work, I have seen firsthand, in states all over the country, how structured, thoughtful initiatives combined with a dedicated consortium of mission-driven advocates can lead to a more robust local news ecosystem that in turn leads to a more informed, less divisive, more engaged public. And as a small publisher myself, I experience every day the incredible community ties that local news helps make possible.

Oregonians deserve to have our stories told by us and for us. And this bill would not only make that more possible, it would make it more equitable and sustainable. I urge you to support this bill. Thank you.