

Submitter: Jeb Bladine  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4177

Testimony on HB 4177  
House Committee on Rules, Oregon State Legislature  
Feb. 17, 2026

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Pham and Elmer, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

My name is Jeb Bladine. I am 3rd generation President /Publisher of the News-Register in McMinnville. I'm testifying today on behalf of our community newspaper, and for the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association – two organizations that have participated for more than 50 years on all significant legislation involving Oregon's Open Meetings law.

I am testifying in opposition to HB 4177.

I want to join in support of testimony of others who have outlined ONPA's position on HB 4177. I particularly want to echo concerns expressed about Section 5 of the bill by Susan Myers, executive director of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, which is charged with interpretation and enforcement of this important law.

Section 5 would create a list of public issues that members of governing bodies could discuss without application of any part of the Public Meetings Law – no application of rules about notice, public access, actions taken by a quorum, serial communications and much more. Those are dangerously murky waters for public officials serving the interests of citizens who depend on public transparency of government decision-making.

I believe that Section 5 is a solution in search of a problem. Instead of clarifying the law, it represents significant new complications in public governance.

I would respectfully ask the committee to oppose HB 4177. At a minimum, Section 5 of the bill should be set aside for more appropriate review in collaboration with the Government Ethics Commission, ONPA, and others who represent the public interest in open government.