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Opinion

SB 686 Will Support the Black Press

As a longtime journalist who spent decades in Oregon's newsrooms before I became a state legislator, I remember when the Oregon Capitol had 65 people in the capitol press corps. Now, there are just 15. When I was a reporter at Channel 8, there were 100 people in the newsroom. Now there are only 30. A whopping 75% of journalism jobs in Oregon have been lost since 2001, due to declines in advertising and other revenue that news publishers depend on. And, I've seen how small, trusted Black and community publications close or struggle to stay open.

That's why I support Senate Bill 686. It's about fairness and survival. Big Tech corporations like Google and Facebook have made billions by siphoning off and monetizing local news content. This un-



Lew Frederick

Oregon
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fair trade practice is only getting worse with Big Tech using AI to scrape and summarize local news content and selling advertising on their platforms that completely bypass local news sites like The Skanner or Portland Observer. SB 686 would be a step towards supporting these local media outlets that publish local news. SB 686 will also create an Oregon Civic Information Consortium that would be the strongest in the nation, to ensure grant funds are available to support smaller, community-based and Black-owned newsrooms.

Let's not be fooled by the scare tactics from Big Tech. They've been profiting off our stories and communities for years without paying their fair share. Meta and Google have already agreed to negotiate and pay for local news in Australia, Canada, and California.

They have fair deals with bigger players like the Wall Street Journal and New York Times, but they continue to rip off Black-owned publications and Oregon's local news providers.

Oregon's SB 686 follows that proven model. It ensures these funds go back to the trusted, local voices that tell our stories, hold power accountable and connect us to each other.

The suggestion that this bill will somehow harm Black-owned newspapers and community media is wrong. SB

686 is designed to protect and invest in the smaller, community-rooted outlets that are closest to the people.

Local journalism is not a luxury. It's the bedrock of a healthy democracy. When it disappears, so does the investigative reporting that holds government and big business accountable, critical information about public schools, crime and policing, weather-related emergencies and other key news that our communities depend on. Let's stand up for Oregon's ethnic media, for our civic health and for a future where every community's voice is heard. Let's pass SB 686.

Oregon State Senator Lew Frederick is a veteran journalist and media strategist whose career spans 17 years as a television reporter and a lifelong commitment to public communication, education, and civil rights.

Joy as Resistance: Reclaiming Juneteenth in a Time of Backlash

By Cicley Gay, Board Chairwoman of Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation

Juneteenth, America's newest federal holiday, was meant to symbolize a national reckoning with history and a celebration of freedom when President Joe Biden signed the bipartisan legislation into law in 2021. Yet, just a few years later, we find Juneteenth events canceled in cities across Indiana, Illinois, and Oregon, as backlash against diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives intensifies. This is not just an administrative shift, it's a cultural one. As some seek to erase or diminish Black joy, we must remember that indulging in joy itself has always been an act of resistance.

But Juneteenth also reminds us that freedom in America has never been granted equally. It was delayed for enslaved Black people even after it was declared. Today, for many immigrants, especially Black and brown families, freedom is once again being delayed and denied at borders, in detention centers, and through discriminatory policies. The struggle for liberation is ongoing, and it is interconnected.

Juneteenth itself commemorates the moment when freedom finally reached the enslaved in Galveston, Texas, two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation. That delay was not just a historical footnote; it was a wound that echoes across generations. Today, asylum seekers and migrants, many of them Black and brown, live in limbo, waiting for freedom. The delay may look different,

but the harm is the same.

At Black Lives Matter, we believe that in the face of attempts to silence and suppress, investing in joy is a radical, necessary form of protest. This Juneteenth, we invite all to join us in celebrating and investing in Black and brown joy as a cornerstone of true liberation, while also standing in solidarity with all who are still waiting for freedom to be realized.

The attacks on DEI and the cancellation of Juneteenth events are not isolated incidents; they are part of a larger movement to strip Black communities, and other marginalized groups, of resources and visibility. In this climate, our resistance must evolve. Our response cannot be limited to protest alone. It must also include reclaiming the right to thrive, to play, and to experience joy.

From the earliest Juneteenth celebrations to today's block parties and art festivals, play and happiness have been tools for survival and defiance. For Black and brown communities, joy has always been revolutionary. BLM was founded in 2013 in response to unspeakable tragedies, ones where ruthless oppression, abuse of power, and brutalities flooded our social media timelines following the murder of innocent young men like Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown. Yet even in mourning, our communities found ways to laugh, dance, and dream together. The movement's global resonance is rooted in this duality, the courage to confront injustice, and the audacity to celebrate life.

Juneteenth also invites us



to ask, who in America is still fighting for our freedom? Black and brown immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers face family separation, lack of running water, lack of due process, unsanitary conditions, and more. Undeniably, the same forces that once delayed emancipation, white supremacy, and profit-driven policy, now shape immigration enforcement and send troops when we have the audacity to rise up in cities like Los Angeles.

True freedom is not just the absence of harm; it is the presence of opportunity, creativity, and fulfillment. BLM is evolving to meet the needs of our most vulnerable, investing in programs that provide access to art, wellness, and community spaces. We will continue to advocate for divestment from police, prisons, and punishment paradigms while also pushing for investment into justice, joy, and culture.

More recently, we've invested in youth sports programs in local communities and abroad, from Brooklyn, New York to Ghana, to ensure we are building from

the inside out and advocating for the most vulnerable. We are guided by the wisdom of our ancestors, who, even in the darkest times, found ways to nurture hope and rebuild. This Juneteenth, let us do more than remember the past. Let us build the future. Migration is a declaration of hope. Just as Black Americans fled the South during the Great Migration seeking dignity, safety, and opportunity, today's immigrants are doing the same. We call on local leaders, philanthropists, and allies to invest in Black communities and to stand in solidarity with all who are still fighting for freedom. The right to give, to gather, and to celebrate, are as vital as any policy change.

Let this Juneteenth serve as a vision for what America can become. In the face of those who would turn back the clock, we choose to move forward, fueled by the power of joy as resistance. This year, and every year, let us honor Juneteenth with bold action and the unwavering belief that freedom includes the right for everyone to play, to dream, and to live fully.