

Joint Ways Means, General Government Committee

Monday, March 11, 2013

Testimony on Funding for the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office

Dear Co-Chair Steiner Hayward, Co- Chair Smith, Sen. Johnson, Sen. Whitsett, Rep. Gomberg, and Rep. Nathanson,

My name is Wes García, I am a second-year law student at Willamette University College of Law, and I am writing in support of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions work and the budget that invests in their service. During the summer of 2012 I had the privilege of doing a joint internship between the Advocacy Commissions, Oregon Department of Justice, and Willamette University College of Law to examine Oregon's hate crime protections from both a legal and policy perspective. During that time I communicated with different Commissions, seeking their input and feedback which helped to guide my work and research that ended in a 22-page findings and recommendations report.

The Commissions are valuable to Oregon because government has such an integrated role in our lives and these commissions are proponents for communities of color and women who have been and are underrepresented in these matters. They also provide an important local link with the College of Law when working on legal social advocacy efforts at the state governmental level. Additionally, they are illustrative of additional career options law students can take when considering ways they can serve their state and make a living. Personally, they have enabled me to contribute to efforts helping improve hate crime laws and policies. This is important because hate crimes are not only an invidious affront to the individual victim, but also to the community to which they belong. It is with efforts like this and many others that the Advocacy Commission helps to make Oregon an even better state for everyone.

Speaking as a student who has benefitted from my experience working with the Advocacy Commission, and those who will in the future, I urge you to please continue funding the staff that provide and important service and gateway to opportunity.

Sincerely,



Wesley Garcia  
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Willamette University College of Law