## OREGON LAW CENTER

921 SW Washington, Suite 516 Portland, Or. 97205 (503) 936-8959

## TESTMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 833 Before the Senate Business and Transportation Committee April 11, 2013 Submitted By: Sybil Hebb

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Starr, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 833, which would provide access to a short term driver license for Oregonians who cannot meet the stringent documentation requirements of the current driver license program.

OLC is a statewide non-profit law firm whose mission is to provide access to justice for the low income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. Our clients generally fall within 125% of the federal poverty level. The populations we serve are fighting a constant battle to maintain a basic minimum standard of living for themselves and their children. They are without the benefit of financial reserves or support to tide them over during unexpected hard times, and they are often living in or just escaping crisis. People in these circumstances often have difficulty maintaining accurate family records, or obtaining requisite documents sufficient to apply for a standard driver license. Undocumented workers may not have the documents required under current law to obtain a driver license.

Lack of a drivers' license creates an additional barrier to vulnerable people struggling to escape poverty and establish safety and security for themselves and their families. Oregonians and undocumented workers living in Oregon need to get to work, church, the store and school without being penalized for those activities. Without a drivers' license, it is more difficult for people to take the necessary steps to end homelessness; apply for or get to a job; rent a home; open a bank account; cash a check; or access food stamps or other public benefits if eligible. Allowing short-term drivers' licenses will directly benefit young children, elderly citizens, students and immigrants (both documented and undocumented).

Passage of this bill will improve traffic safety and reduce the number of unlicensed, uninsured drivers on Oregon's roads. By creating an accessible license for those who pass the driver test and can meet basic residency and identification requirements, the bill will create more licensed and insured drivers.

Most importantly, the bill will reduce a barrier to vulnerable people struggling to escape the cycle of poverty. Passage of SB 833 will provide important relief for individuals, families, and our communities. For these reasons, we urge your support. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.