



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

March 20, 2013

To: Joint Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee
Senator Jackie Winters, Co-Chair
Representative Jennifer Williamson, Co-Chair
Committee Members

Re: HB 5016 - Oregon Judicial Department - Support

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League has a position on Oregon State Courts that affirms the separation of powers and the treatment of the Oregon Judicial Department, the third branch of our state government, as a separate, independent, co-equal branch of state government.

The League's position supports adequate and stable funding to perform the Department's core functions and critical services. The League believes that access to courts is a critical issue and encourages the committee to provide a funding level to restore service levels in the Circuit Courts. Additional clerks are needed for non-represented litigants in order to complete paperwork accurately.

A League study of the Oregon Judiciary in 2007 included a survey of the conditions of the circuit courthouses, which indicated an inventory of maintenance and safety issues. The League supports continued appropriations for deferred maintenance and technology improvements for courthouses. Special appropriations or bonding may be needed for replacement courthouse projects, as well as the eCourt system.

The Judicial Department request in HB 2563 to increase salaries of justices of the Supreme Court, Appeals Court, Tax Court and Circuit Courts was reasonable since the judges deserve an increased salary commensurate with their responsibilities. In addition, the Court of Appeals panel approved last session should be funded.

Drug treatment specialty courts have been effective in halting the criminal cycle and decreasing recidivism rates. Funding of these services is cost effective in the long term for the offenders, their families and the system. Long term savings are anticipated in the public safety budget. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Robin Wisdom in cursive.

Robin Wisdom
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Karen Nibler in cursive.

Karen Nibler
Social Policy Coordinator