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February 20, 2014

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Senate Committee on Judiciary
Chair Senator Floyd Prozanski
Vice-chair Senator Betsy Close

Members:
Senator Michael Dembrow
Senator Jeff Kruse
Senator Arnie Roblan

Re: HB 4143 and Oregon State Bar Oversight of Legal Aid Programs

I served as the Senator from Central Oregon from 1993-2001. During that period, I chaired judiciary for six years and served on judiciary for eight years.

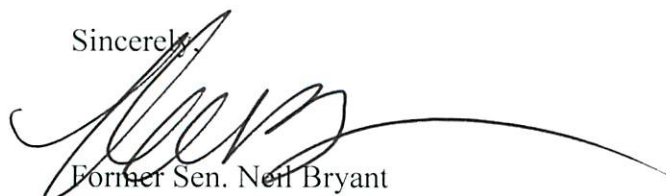
In 1997, I supported the legislation to establish a structure for fiscal and regulatory oversight of the legal aid programs. The structure was designed to ensure that the state revenue would be used efficiently and effectively to provide services to address the needs of low income Oregonians statewide.

To that end, we drafted ORS 9.572, which created the Oregon State Bar Legal Services Program. This legislation requires the Bar to manage the funds, develop standards and guidelines for providers, and create a Legal Services Program Committee to provide ongoing oversight and evaluation in order to ensure compliance and further the legal service's goals.

We choose the Bar to oversee this program because the Bar had experience regulating attorneys, and it has an institutional interest in Oregon's legal aid system. The Bar has been maintaining the Standards and Guidelines and overseeing legal aid providers ever since. The program works very well.

HB 4143 will route additional revenue, this time from class action settlements and judgments, through the same program that has been overseeing legal aid providers for the last 17 years. With appropriate fiscal and regulatory oversight, why do anything else if the system is working?

Sincerely,



Former Sen. Neil Bryant

A legacy of service to our community.

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