



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON

February 25, 2014

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senator Betsy Close, Vice Chair

Re: HB 4143A - Support the Legal Aid Supplementary Account

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 states that The State of Oregon should provide access to its courts that meets the diverse needs of all people who use the state courts.

The League supports the establishment of the Legal Aid Supplementary Account in the State Treasury and the deposit of unclaimed damages from class action lawsuits in that account to fund Legal Aid Services. The League objects to the return of damages to the defendant and prefers the use of these unclaimed damages to expand the numbers of persons served by legal aid services.

Currently those who cannot hire an attorney for a civil case, do not have access to the court process. This system denies equal access for the low income citizen who may be victimized in domestic violence cases, wage complaints and landlord tenant disputes. Only 15% of those eligible for legal aid are served now, so additional funds would lead to access to justice for many more citizens.

The League encourages your approval of this important bill. 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