



From the office of
Senator Richard Devlin

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
900 COURT ST NE
SALEM, OR 97301**

February 26, 2014

Dear Colleagues:

I ask you for your support of House Bill 4143, the cy pres bill that would direct unclaimed class action judgment awards to an endowment fund to benefit legal aid services in Oregon.

As a former legal aid lawyer, former president of the Oregon Law Foundation, and former member of the Campaign for Equal Justice board, I know well the critical importance and cost effectiveness of the work of legal aid organizations.

Attorneys, on the most tattered of shoestring budgets, represent women and children escaping dangerous situations, people experiencing homelessness, and those facing a myriad of other complex legal issues for which they would have little or no assistance otherwise. A study on domestic violence established the absolute correlation between access to legal aid services and a decline in domestic violence.¹

Despite the critical importance of their work, legal aid organizations have continually faced immense funding shortfalls. We have an opportunity today to address this problem in a modest way. This bill creates an endowment fund for legal aid services in Oregon wherein the unclaimed damages from class action suits is deposited as principal. The interest generated from these deposited funds will be distributed to legal aid organizations on a quarterly basis.

Defendants who have harmed Oregonians should be held liable for the full amount of harm they caused. This bill is a straightforward way to hold accountable those who cause harm to the people of our state, while directing unclaimed funds to organizations that do work of immeasurable value for the state's most vulnerable.

I hope you will join me in supporting this bill.

Sincerely,

Ann Lininger
State Representative, House District 38

¹ Farmer, Amy, and Jill Tiefenthaler. "Explaining the recent decline in domestic violence." *Contemporary Economic Policy* 21.2 (2003): 158+. *General OneFile*. Web. 13 Feb. 2014.
<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do+GALE%7CA100500092&v=2.1&u=sale38182&it=r&p=ITOF&sw=w&asid=a07c2838cced70678f81d012b3fe0d20>