



**Vote YES on HB 4143A.**

**Use unclaimed tortfeasor damages to fund access to justice.**

- **Justice and fairness are core Oregon values.** HB 4143A will bring Oregon into line with the vast majority of states to ensure that uncollected amounts from class action judgments and settlements are put to good public purpose use, rather than returned to the wrongdoer. HB 4143A follows the growing trend of states using residual class actions funds to support legal aid programs.
- Oregon's legal aid programs serve **all 36 of Oregon's counties** and focus on the needs of each particular community. Legal aid programs work with government, the courts, law enforcement, other non-profits and community service organizations to address the legal needs of the poor.
- Oregon's legal aid programs play a **critical role in the justice system** by providing access to justice on a broad range of issues including dealing with civil legal needs of the poor and elderly, including family law--domestic violence (41%), housing (24%), consumer (10%), income maintenance (disability benefits, unemployment benefits, etc.) (6%), employment (4%), health (2%), and other matters. Low-income Oregonians—victims of domestic violence, veterans, children, and the elderly—all face a host of legal problems that require help from a lawyer.
- Oregon's legal aid programs are **woefully underfunded**, with funding to address only 15% of the civil legal needs of the poor. Low-income families and seniors must often go without needed legal representation in trying to navigate our complicated justice system, putting additional strain on courts. Although HB 4143A will not immediately fix legal aid's funding problems, it has been identified by the Task Force on Legal Aid funding as a part of the long term solution to addressing the justice gap in Oregon.
- Interest on these funds would go to the Oregon State Bar to be used for funding the Legal Services Program established under ORS 9.572 in 1997 which **provides fiscal and regulatory oversight of Oregon's legal aid programs**. Senator Neil Bryant, acting as Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, supported legislation to establish this structure. The Oregon State Bar Standards and Guidelines, which were last revised November 2010, incorporate the American Bar Association Standards for the Provision of Civil Legal Aid, and provide 22 pages of detailed information regulating the practice of law by legal aid providers and establishing structures for accountability and oversight. On February 20, 2014, former Sen. Bryant said, **"The program works very well."**

**Access to civil legal services reduces domestic violence, strengthens families,  
and creates opportunities for long term safety and self-sufficiency.**

***For the above reasons, CEJ respectfully urges your YES vote on HB 4143.***