

Dear Judiciary Committee -

I write in support of SJR 4 and urge the committee to recommend its passage and also work for its passage.

During the almost 40 years that I've been a member of the Oregon State Bar, I've practiced in the Circuit Courts of several counties as well as before the Oregon's appellate courts and the federal trial and appellate courts. I've appeared before dozens of judges over the years and noted that judicial competence increases with experience. I've also noticed that there is no fall off or even waning of competence at 75.

Secretary of State Brown, also a lawyer with trial experience, was wise to introduce this bill which can insure that Oregon's most experienced judges are not arbitrarily removed from the bench at a point when their experience can be most valuable to Oregon's citizens.

I would respectfully request that this bill be named in honor of Judge Mercedes Deiz who was forced into retirement at age 75 against her wishes. Judge Deiz was the first African-American woman to be admitted to the Oregon State Bar and the first female African-American judge. She was learned, compassionate, practical, and very hard working. She ran a very efficient court room. Everyone who appeared in her court room from jurors to parties to witnesses felt that they had been treated with due respect. Her involuntary retirement was a great loss.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge that you vote SJR 4 out of committee with a unanimous endorsement.

Best wishes.

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