



WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**Conserving the Peace Through Values Driven Service
Sheriff Pat Garrett**

March 25, 2015

Chair Jeff Barker and Members
House Committee on Judiciary
900 Court St. NE, H-480
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2329 Support Testimony

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

I am presenting written testimony in support of HB 2329 as Legal Aid is a vital community partner in the justice system. As I'm sure you know, there are many people that are victimized in one way or another and in need of legal advice or legal representation – victims of domestic violence, unfair housing discrimination, unfair labor practices, etc. The legal assistance that Legal Aid provides for the poor segment of our community is vital and ensures them having access to important, sometimes life-saving remedies. Without equal access to legal representation and the protections of the justice system, there would be no true justice in our society.

Legal Aid attorneys are very active in multiple workgroups and partner organizations that work proactively with law enforcement and the courts to help solve problems, improve systems, and provide training to justice system partners. I have direct knowledge that Legal Aid is actively involved in the following groups or projects in Washington County: Domestic Violence Intervention Council, Washington County Justice League, annual domestic violence training for law enforcement, the Steering Committee for the Washington County Justice Center, various workgroups with justice system partners and court staff to improve court forms, and more.

Our deputies and sheriff's office personnel regularly refer victims and people in need of civil legal assistance, including representation in protective order cases, to our local legal aid office. The work that Legal Aid provides is invaluable to all of our communities across the state.

I ask for your support of HB 2329 and the additional funding that this bill provides to Legal Aid in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Pat Garrett
Washington County Sheriff