

**Testimony before the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
In support of SB 5516
On behalf of the Oregon State Bar
March 30, 2015**

Co-Chairs Shields and Williamson and members of the committee;

Elder abuse has long been a serious and under addressed problem in Oregon. In recent years the legislature, law enforcement, local governments and the Oregon State Bar have all contributed significantly to efforts to bring an increased awareness to this problem and to begin to take concrete action when elder abuse is reported.

For example, every Oregon State Bar member is a mandatory reporter for elder abuse. Lawyers in Oregon receive training on identifying and reporting elder abuse through the OSB's continuing legal education program, a requirement for all active Oregon attorneys.

The Oregon State Bar fully supports the creation and funding of an Elder Abuse Prosecutor within the Department of Justice not just to prosecute crimes directly, but to work with law enforcement and with communities throughout Oregon to improve efforts to combat elder abuse wherever it occurs. With this single position created within the DOJ, Oregon will have someone actively coordinating with law enforcement and community partners around the state to make sure that the best information and resources are available to everyone engaged in the fight against elder abuse.

Appointing an Elder Abuse Prosecutor will not eliminate elder abuse over night. Creating this position, however, is a simple and cost-effective way to improve coordination in Oregon's response to this problem.

The Oregon State Bar is optimistic that this will make a real difference in our fight against elder abuse, and we encourage the legislature to consider and support funding for this request.