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March 26, 2015

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

Re: Testimony in Support for HB 2329

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

I am presenting written testimony in support of HB 2329 because legal aid plays an important role in providing access to justice and helping parties resolve disputes under the rule of law. Legal aid helps the victims of domestic violence get restraining orders, divorce and custody. Legal aid also helps the victims of domestic violence with related issues involving housing, medical care and work. Legal aid helps the victims of fraud, unfair housing discrimination, unfair labor practices and unfair housing practices.

Expansion of legal aid to domestic violence victims is critical and necessary, as it serves to level the legal playing field for vulnerable families.

In addition to helping individual clients, legal aid works effectively with this office, law enforcement, domestic violence shelters, domestic violence service providers, state agencies and social service programs to provide a coordinated community response to domestic violence and sexual assault at the state and local level. For example, Robin Selig and Sybil Hebb serve on the Oregon Department of Justice Crime Victim Services Division Advisory Committee along with Kim Larson, the Director the Victim Assistance Program in my office. Chris Sielicky, an attorney from the legal aid office in Salem, serves with me on the Marion County Domestic Violence Council. These connections and cooperation improve our ability to achieve better results.

Please support HB 2329 to provide additional funding for legal aid.

Sincerely,

Walt Beglau
Marion County District Attorney