

# OREGON LAW CENTER

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**Testimony in Support of SB 939**  
**Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**Submitted By: Sybil Hebb**  
**April 7th, 2015**

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Kruse, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), I submit this written testimony in support of SB 363, which with its Dash 1 amendments would prohibit the imposition of additional fees on motions to set-aside records of arrest or conviction. I apologize that I am unable to testify in person this morning.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income vulnerable populations. One aspect of our work is helping vulnerable low-income people access safe housing and employment to help them break the cycle of poverty and achieve safety and stability for themselves and their families.

Our first experience with expungment cases began in earnest because of a Pro Bono clinic offered through the generosity of a local business in the community. Once the clinic was up and running, we were frankly surprised at how great the demand was for this kind of assistance. For so many people, an old arrest or conviction is an insurmountable barrier to safe housing or employment. We sought and received grant funding to provide more services, and were still unable to meet the need. That grant has since expired, but we continue to look for ways to support this kind of assistance. For those who have met the criteria for a set-aside, an expungment can open doors to self-sufficiency and change the trajectory of lives.

There are three fees for people seeking expungment: (1) a fee for a criminal background check, (2) a fingerprinting fee, and (3) the court filing fee. It is best to consult with an attorney for legal advice about the criteria, qualifications, and process. Attorney fees are an additional cost for all those who are not able to access legal aid. These cumulative fees have a disproportionate impact on low-income people, and make it harder for vulnerable people to access relief.

Those who meet the strict eligibility criteria for set-aside of an arrest or an expungment have demonstrated a desire and capacity for reformation. SB 363 with the Dash 1 amendments will ensure that additional processing fees are not added to an already expensive undertaking for vulnerable populations seeking to improve their lives. OLC respectfully urges support of this proposal. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.