

**Testimony of Helen Hirschbiel on HB 2565
House Business and Labor Committee**

April 8, 2015

Chair Holvey, members of the committee:

My name is Helen Hirschbiel and I am the General Counsel for the Oregon State Bar. I am here today on behalf of the Oregon State Bar Board of Governors to answer any questions you may have about the bar and how it might be impacted by HB 2565.

The Oregon State Bar does not oppose applying the Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act to the Oregon State Bar. To be sure, the bar appreciates, understands, and supports the underlying purposes of PECBA, and has a history of and reputation for supporting its employees.

Decades ago the bar worked with the legislature to allow OSB employees the option to participate in PERS. Over the course of the last ten years, the Oregon State Bar has had no Employment Practice Liability insurance claims and has not contested any workers compensation or unemployment claims. People like working at the bar because the environment is collaborative, rather than hierarchical, and because the bar provides great benefits and flexibility—particularly to those with families.

The bar was neither consulted about, nor informed in advance of, the introduction of HB 2565. As a result, the bar is uncertain about all of the possible consequences of simply adding PECBA to the list of statutes to which the OSB is subject under ORS 9.010(3).

The bar is a public corporation and an instrumentality of the judicial department; it is not a state agency. While the bar is subject to some laws applicable to public bodies, it is not a public employer, and our employees are not public employees.

It is not possible to know how exactly the PECBA will be interpreted as applied to the bar. However, the bar is willing to accept the bill as written, and will address any questions as they arise. The bar does not oppose what we believe is a sound policy generally—that all employees have the right to bargain collectively. Thus, the Board of Governors does not oppose HB 2565.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.