

**Testimony before the House Judiciary Committee
In support of SB 381
On behalf of the Oregon State Bar
April 23, 2015**

Chair Barker, 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 in support of SB 381.

Senate Bill 381 addresses three distinct and important issues related to governance of the Oregon State Bar.

First, this bill would create an additional position on the OSB Board of Governors for an out-of-state member. Lawyer-members of the board are elected from seven districts throughout Oregon based on the location of their principal offices in Oregon. This means that a member of the bar whose principal office is outside the state of Oregon is not eligible to run for the Board of Governors. Currently the Oregon State Bar has over 2,500 members who maintain their principal office outside of Oregon. Although these members have the same obligations as any other active OSB member, they are not currently represented on the OSB Board of Governors. This bill would create a position on the board to represent out-of-state members.

The second substantive change that SB 381 makes is to the timelines for payment of the Professional Liability Fund assessment. The bill replaces the specific late payment notice requirements with a more general requirement that the bar provide written notice of delinquency and a reasonable opportunity to cure the delinquency. SB 381 also clarifies the board's authority to establish the deadline for payment of the assessment.

The primary purpose of these changes is to simplify and reduce the costs of configuration and implementation of the bar's new association management software by allowing the bar to establish deadlines for PLF payments that will align with other payment or reporting deadlines, and that will work easily in the new software, rather than require excessive and repeated configuration.

The final set of changes relates to the board of bar examiners. First, SB 381 gives the Supreme Court more flexibility in its appointment of the Board of Bar Examiners, removing the requirement that the Board consist of twelve individuals. It also clarifies that the board of bar examiners carries out the admissions function of the Oregon State Bar. Finally, the bill provides that applications for admission to the bar are confidential, and subject to disclosure only as provided in the rules of the Supreme Court. This provision is consistent with existing Supreme Court rules relating to admission.

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