

**Testimony of Oregon State Bar in Support of HB 5013
Before the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety**

March 16, 2017

Co-Chairs Winters and Stark, and members of the Committee:

Oregon State Bar's Board of Governors, on behalf of the more than 15,000 active members of the Oregon State Bar, urge this committee to support full funding for the Oregon Judicial Department.

The Oregon State Bar's first priority is access to justice. The judicial branch touches the lives of thousands of Oregonians every day. From supporting crime victims, to facilitating Oregon business and economic development, to resolving issues for families in crisis, Oregon courts are a critical part of what makes Oregon work. Our courts are involved in resolving disputes that may seem big or small from the outside. For those involved, however, each case is important.

We believe that strong courts help build strong communities. With that in mind, our concern at the Oregon State Bar is to make sure that Oregon's court system can operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. The bulk of the work moving thousands of cases through the courts each day is done by hundreds of dedicated employees at local courthouses. Our courts cannot run without their contribution, and indeed, cuts to this workforce over the past decade have affected the courts' ability to perform its work in processing cases efficiently and in a timely manner.

The courts have made up for many of these cutbacks by embracing new technology, such as Oregon eCourt, but cuts to staff at our courthouses inevitably mean delays not just for those accused of crimes, but also for crime victims, businesses, witnesses, jurors, and everyone else who conducts business in our courts. We strongly supports funding for adequate court facilities, supports for legal representation for all Oregonians, and supports for the judges and the staff of the judicial branch itself.

SB 5514 also includes pass throughs for a number of important programs that make significant contributions to our judicial system, including the Oregon Law Commission, and the Oregon Council on Court Procedures.

The bar has worked for several year with its members, the business community, community groups and current and former state leaders to establish the Citizens' Campaign for Court Funding, to provide ongoing advocacy for adequate funding for our court system. We invite you to join us and provide the courts with an adequate budget for the next biennium.

Thank you for your time and consideration.