



**Oregon
Law Center**
WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE FOR LOW INCOME OREGONIANS

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**Testimony Supporting HB 2777
House Committee on Human Services
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Chair Barker, Vice-Chairs Williamson and Olson, and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony on behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC) in support of HB 2777, which authorizes mass transit districts to establish an administrative process to handle certain ordinance violations outside the court system, and allows a transit district to require the performance of community service in lieu of a fine for violation.

As you may know, OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. Many of our low-income clients depend upon the transit system as their primary system of transportation. Our clients use mass transit to visit their friends and family, get to work, do their errands, and access critical social services. It is important to ensure that access to transit is as available and accessible as possible.

In the event of a violation of a transit rule, current law allows a prosecution for a Class A Misdemeanor. This can often lead to significant collateral consequences to employment and housing that may be vastly out of proportion to the nature of the infraction. In addition, fines for citations may be impossible for some low-income Oregonians to ever pay.

HB 2777 allows a transit agency to put a citation on hold for up to 90 days, in order to allow an administrative adjudication that would keep the process out of court. The agency would also be able to substitute community service in lieu of payment of a fine. Passage of this bill will protect against significant collateral consequences of transit violations that currently impact low-income people, seniors, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable Oregonians to a greater extent than others. Passage of the bill will allow greater security of access to mass transit.

For these reasons, we urge support of HB 2777. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.