

Oregon State Bar Testimony in Support of SB 11

February 14, 2017

The Oregon State Bar is committed to supporting a strong and independent judiciary. Keeping the judicial branch strong includes many variables, but one that is in need of attention is the matter of judicial compensation.

The judicial branch is essential to the competent and effective enforcement of the rule of law. Adequate judicial salaries are crucial to attract competent lawyers to the bench, and to retain them after appointment or election. This is especially the case for lawyers in private practice, whose salaries are generally higher than the salaries of lawyers in the public sector. A bench with a mix of attorneys from the private and public sectors is preferable in order to maintain a mix of backgrounds and experience. Judicial salaries must at least be high enough to interest and retain successful lawyers who are inclined to public service.

Judicial salaries are a reflection of the esteem in which we hold the judicial branch. While SB 11 does not get Oregon all the way to where it needs to be, it is an important step to maintaining the strong and independent judiciary that Oregon deserves.