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Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

SB 5512 – DCBS Budget

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Co-Chairs, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 5512, the budget bill for the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS).

The mission of the Oregon Law Center (OLC) is to “achieve justice for the low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.” OLC has been engaged in working with the legislature, state agencies, and community allies over the years on the Oregon Health Plan, Medicaid expansion, and Healthcare Transformation, in keeping with our mission.

The role of DCBS has changed in recent years, and we very much supported the marketplace exchange shift to DCBS. The agency has proven itself by bringing needed stability to a fractured system. It is a tribute to the staff and legislative oversight that we in Oregon have been successfully enrolling Oregonians into qualified health plans. We appreciate DCBS commitment to outreach and community assisters (including nonprofits and agents) to help Oregonians know about, and make better choices for their healthcare.

We participated in, and helped to organize the Inclusion, Affordability, and Innovation (IAI) coalition. As I have testified repeatedly, the values of our coalition are in our name. We have also supported the “Mend the Gap” report and continue to work with others to achieve those important goals. DCBS has been an important partner, and in this regard, I would like to acknowledge the important collaborative work in the 2016 session, and to date, on HB 4071

(Compact for Free Association – COFA premium assistance) and HB 4017, which established Affordable Care Act (ACA) authority for waivers under 1331 (Basic Health) and 1332 (State Innovation Waivers).

Given the uncertainty with respect to the ACA at the national level, it is essential that we work together to come up with the best solutions under emerging circumstances. Everything I have worked on with DCBS has been a cooperative, inclusive endeavor, and staff, including Director Allen and other key personnel, has been professional, competent, and responsive.

Finally, advocates understand the budget challenges ahead, but I would simply say that DCBS accounts well for the investments made in its important work, and I am hopeful that their budget will be adequately and appropriately funded.

Thank you for your consideration. I greatly appreciate your leadership and commitment.

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