

Rep. Jeff Barker, Chair
Committee Members
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, Room 331
Salem, Oregon 97301
hjud.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: HB 4097

Dear Chair Barker and Committee Members,

As a member of the Oregon State Bar, as the Columbia County Law Librarian and as a member of the Oregon Council of County Law Libraries, I am writing to urge you to vote against HB 4097, which I fear would decimate the county law library system in Oregon.

County law libraries have traditionally played an enormously important role in the justice system. Now, more than ever, it is critical to support county law libraries in continuing their well-established mission of serving the legal community as well as expanding their mission to provide legal resources to the public, particularly the low-income community.

County law libraries provide essential print and digital references for local lawyers, especially in smaller and lower income counties where most attorneys are solo practitioners or in small firms that are operating on modest budgets. In more populated counties, like Multnomah, solo practitioners and attorneys in small firms face the same financial restrictions. County law libraries are often the only resource available to this significant portion of the legal community.

County law libraries are also an important legal resource for the community at large. For example, here in Columbia County we hold free Lawyer in the Law Library workshops at least once a month on various legal topics. More and more members of the public are coming into our county law libraries to use the print, digital and other resources we make available to them.

HB 4097 proposes a change that promises to shatter every effort that Oregon's county law libraries have been making to address Access to Justice goals. At the very least, before you vote to reorganize the county law library system, you should require an in-depth study, with county law librarians playing a major role.

Thank you for your consideration and courtesies.

Pamela Schultz Davis

Columbia County Law Library

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