



**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: February 8, 2018

TO: Honorable Jeff Barker, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Aaron Knott, Legislative Director  
Oregon Attorney General's Office

SUBJECT: House Bill 4096 – Judicial Salaries

This testimony is presented in support of HB 4096

Of state agencies, the Department of Justice is among the most reliant on the judicial branch. Every aspect of our practice is completely dependent on their wisdom, good judgment, and even temperament. We expect our judges to represent the best and brightest of our lawyers, but we also frequently demand the assumption of truly drastic reductions in salary in exchange for the privilege of donning the robes. While judicial salaries may never truly reflect the value afforded to an experienced attorney in the private legal market, we should not tolerate the consistent ranking of Oregon's judges as among the most poorly compensated of their kind anywhere in the country.

We are truly blessed as a state to have attracted so many committed, intelligent, diligent lawyers to serve as the custodians of our judicial branch, but we have done so despite a rate of compensation that cannot fairly be described as adequate. While HB 4096 does not truly reflect the value that these consummate professionals provide, it is nonetheless a necessary step.

The Attorney General and Department of Justice join our partners throughout Oregon's legal community in calling for the passage of HB 4096.

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