

**Testimony of the Oregon State Bar in Support of HB 2239
Before the House Judiciary Committee**

January 22, 2019

Chair Williamson and members of the committee:

The Oregon State Bar supports HB 2239, which proposes to add new judgeships in twelve judicial districts around Oregon.

The proper administration of justice is directly dependent on having a sufficient number of judges to manage the caseload presented. Significant consequences can result if there are not enough judges to perform the work before the court, including reduced quality of outcomes, risks to public safety, significant delays, increased costs to litigants and court resources, public dissatisfaction with the judicial system, and reduced job satisfaction of court officers and staff. A healthy economy is dependent on businesses and private parties having a means to resolve disputes in a timely and efficient manner.

These new judicial positions are proposed specifically in order to increase court resources available to handle juvenile dependency hearings. While quickly resolving cases is important for all court users, children in dependency cases are particularly vulnerable if their cases drag on for too long. In order to provide stability for children and certainty for parents, it is critical that juvenile dependency cases be resolved quickly.

Courts throughout Oregon have taken numerous steps to handle more cases with fewer staff, including using specialty and treatment courts designed to streamline certain types of cases and meet the needs of certain unique populations. The transition to electronic filing and records management has also increased efficiency for litigants and case management by the court. Despite these improvements, the increased caseloads that come with a growing state necessitate additional judgeships.

The Oregon State Bar strongly encourages the legislature to pass HB 2239 in order to allow our court system to continue to provide the quality of service in juvenile dependency cases that Oregonians deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Christine R. Costantino
2019 Oregon State Bar President