

OREGON TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

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Testimony in Support of HB 2238 and HB 2239

House Committee on Judiciary

Arthur Towers, for the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association

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Thank you for the opportunity to express OTLA's strong support for HB 2238 (judicial compensation) and HB 2239 (expansion of judicial capacity).

The members of the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association fight for Oregon's underdogs. We fight for workers who face on-the-job discrimination, harassment or retaliation for whistleblowing. We help defrauded consumers who work hard and play by the rules. We also represent Oregonians traumatized by elder abuse, sexual abuse, or child abuse.

Injured and victimized Oregonians rely on a functioning court system to get justice.

All the people we represent share a common challenge: Justice delayed is justice denied.

The current shortage of judges slows down the legal process. If it takes years for an abuse victim's case to wind its way through the legal system, it becomes very difficult to get the closure and healing process underway.

Consumers who desperately need compensation for their loss can be starved out if the wheels of justice turn slowly. Delays lead consumers to take pennies on the dollar for righteous claims. Deep pocketed fraudsters rely on delays as protection from accountability. We strongly support HB 2239 to grow judicial capacity, particularly in child welfare cases. 14 new judges will make a big difference.

HB 2238 enables our legal system to attract high quality candidates to the bench. Oregon courthouses are the place that the Davids whom we represent can be on a relatively equal footing with the Goliaths who have harmed them. HB 2238 makes it more likely that our courts will attract judges who understand the civil justice system, especially complex civil cases. At a time of intense competition for government resources and in a national climate of deregulation and limited government, **it is more important than ever to make sure that we keep a high-functioning, adequately funded judiciary that attracts high-quality candidates.** **We urge you to support HB 2238 and HB 2239.**