

**Testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee
On behalf of the Oregon State Bar**

January 30, 2019

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee:

My name is Chris Costantino and I have a family law practice at Samuels Yoelin Kantor in Portland. I am speaking to you today as the 2019 Oregon State Bar President. It is a pleasure to be here today and I welcome the opportunity to talk with you about the Oregon State Bar.

The Oregon State Bar – The Oregon State Bar (OSB) is a public corporation and an instrumentality of the judicial department with over 15,000 active members. The bar licenses and disciplines lawyers and performs other functions to benefit the public. The Oregon State Bar supports and ensures public protection, access to justice for all, as well as the administration of justice and a fair and impartial judiciary. The bar does not receive any direct financial support in the form of taxpayer dollars from the General Fund, but is funded entirely by licensing fees and revenue from various member service programs. The CEO of the bar oversees approximately 100 staff members not including the Professional Liability Fund.

Governance – The bar is administered by a 19-member volunteer Board of Governors. The OSB House of Delegates (HOD) serves as the representative assembly, voting on proposed rules, dues and policies. It helps set policy direction for the bar. Composed of approximately 230 delegates, the HOD meets annually, and may occasionally convene for a special meeting on topics of importance.

Unique Traits – The Oregon bar is unique in a number of ways:

- **Open Disciplinary System** – It is the only bar in the country which allows public access to disciplinary complaint files from the time the complaint is filed with the bar.
- **Mandatory Malpractice Coverage** – It is one of the only bars in the nation that requires attorneys to have malpractice insurance and that has a self-insuring organization to provide that coverage – the Professional Liability Fund.
- **Public Member Involvement** – The bar encourages public participation in all aspects of its operations. Four of the 19 members of the Board are public members. Public members also participate throughout the Oregon lawyer discipline system. Non-lawyers sit on the State Professional Responsibility Board, local investigation committees, trial panels and the Unlawful Practice of Law Committee.
- **Lawyers Average Nine Hours a Month Pro Bono** – Oregon lawyers spend an average of 10.8 hours per month providing pro-bono legal services. This does not include those working for legal aid organizations or non-profit groups that regularly provide legal services on a free or reduced fee basis. (2017 OSB Economic Survey)
- **Campaign for Equal Justice** – Oregon is one of the few states that has developed a non-profit fundraising campaign to raise money from the legal community for legal services to the poor.

Since 1991, CEJ has raised \$23 million for legal aid. This year the goal for the annual campaign is \$1.2 million.

Thank you for your time, and we'd be happy to answer any additional questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine R. Costantino". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine R. Costantino
2019 Oregon State Bar President

For more information contact:

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