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**Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 356  
Parenting Plan Notification Requirements  
Before the House Judiciary Committee**

**May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), I submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 356. I was a member of the Custody and Parenting Time Legislative Workgroup that met during this past interim. This bill is a product of that workgroup. I thank you for the opportunity to submit comments.

OLC is a statewide non-profit law firm whose mission is to provide access to justice for the low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. Because we are not able to help all who qualify for our services, we prioritize the provision of assistance to the neediest Oregonians – the lowest of income, the most vulnerable. The single most frequent request for help from our offices is in the area of family law. Often, our clients are struggling to escape domestic violence. Rarely are the issues facing our clients more compelling than when parents seek our assistance in establishing safety and stability for themselves and their children in the aftermath of a separation. In all cases, we look for outcomes that, tailored to the needs and circumstances of the individuals involved, will enable the children to thrive. It is through this lens that my testimony is provided regarding the bills before the committee this morning.

Senate Bill 356 would amend ORS 107.102, Oregon's parenting plan statute, to provide explicit authority for judges to include provisions in a detailed parenting plan requiring the custodial parent to inform the non-custodial parent about specific matters involving the child(ren), and/or to require that the non-custodial parent have the opportunity to provide input regarding specified child-related matters. While this authority is already inherent in Oregon statutes, the fact that the bill makes this explicit will perhaps facilitate greater use of this authority. The bill is in keeping with the state's parenting time policies as set out in ORS 107.101, 107.102, 107.106, and 107.149, in which on-going communication and involvement between fit parents and children is a priority when it is in the best interests of the children. The bill does not modify the over-arching provision in ORS 107.102 that when developing a detailed parenting plan, the court may consider only the best interests of the child(ren) and the safety of the parties. For these reasons, we support the bill.

Thank you very much for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify before you.