



Oregon Justice of the Peace Association

POSTPONE VOTE ON HB 4210

OJPA represents 22 Justices of the Peace in 20 counties across the state. We work to protect public safety within our communities, provide local access to justice for citizens, and help ease the burden on our overworked state courts.

OJPA agrees with the goal of HB 4210, which we believe is to accommodate individuals who sincerely desire to comply with court ordered financial obligations but demonstrate a limited ability to pay. We are committed to working on collaborative solutions with the Legislature, proponents of the bill, and other stakeholders between now and the 2021 session to develop a comprehensive bill to address issues. However, at this time, OJPA respectfully asks that HB 4210 not be considered during the special session.

During the February 2020 Session, six amendments and a potential workgroup were being considered and those concepts did not get fully vetted prior to the adjournment of the session. We are asking for these amendments and other discussions to occur in a workgroup where we can fully vet all the proposals.

OJPA is committed to achieving the goals of the bill by collectively working to:

- Institute ability-to-pay determinations
- Develop alternative mechanisms to pay off debts
- Create caps on payment
- Encourage communication with courts
- Prohibit warrants and jail time for sole purpose of collecting unpaid fees

Many county justice courts and other local courts are already working with individuals who cannot afford to pay and will continue to do so through these shared goals. However, we believe the provisions in HB 4210 that create a one-size-fits-all prevention of license suspension will drastically impact our public safety system and does not fix the problem. Sometimes a notice of suspension is a tool that is needed to compel those who can afford to pay their fine. Others who owe court fines, will continue to owe court fines under this bill but face additional fees and penalties through a collection agency. OJPA would like to work with all of you to continue the discussion of how to reduce the impact of fines and additional fees on people who cannot afford to pay.

A reduction in court fines will reduce the nearly \$15 million contribution that local courts make to the state Criminal Fine Account. This fund provides much needed training for police officers, crime victims assistance, forensic services at the State Police, local court security, county juvenile/adult corrections and drug and alcohol programs, grants for alcohol and drug abuse prevention, enforcement of driving under the influence of intoxicants enforcement, and state court technology.

Thank you for your consideration and please oppose HB 4210 in its current form and allow us to work with all stakeholders on a solution to address the goal of the bill.

For more information, contact:
Patrick Sieng
503-799-8280 / patrick@siengenterprises.us

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