

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2539  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
APRIL 21, 2021**

**PRESENTED BY: ERIN M. PETTIGREW, ACCESS TO JUSTICE COUNSEL FOR  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS  
OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT**

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Erin M. Pettigrew, Access to Justice Counsel for Legislative Affairs at the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD). OJD supports House Bill 2539. Testimony in support of the bill has already been submitted by Presiding Judge Tracy Prall, Marion County Circuit Court. Accordingly, I will keep my comments brief and welcome questions.

First, I'd like to thank Representative Sollman and the other Sponsors for bringing the bill forward and working with OJD on the concept.

Jury service is one of the most important rights and responsibilities we share, and a jury verdict means a great deal to the parties, victims, survivors and the community at large. We were reminded of the importance of that service yesterday when the jury delivered its verdict in the trial of the murder of George Floyd. The eyes of the world were on that jury and the delivery of justice for survivors and the community at large. OJD actively supports ways to encourage jury service by all Oregonians and seeks to protect jurors as they provide this critical service to our fellows.

HB 2539 would prohibit using juror names in the courtroom but continue making them available to the parties in a case. We understand that the purpose of the bill is to protect the privacy of jurors, while ensuring that a fair and impartial jury can be selected. Using juror numbers in open court may encourage a more open exchange during jury selection, while also helping to protect jurors in other ways.

We take juror safety very seriously. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have strictly limited the number of jury trials we hold, to reduce the number of people in the courthouse. When courts have held jury trials during the pandemic, circuit courts have used either large alternative venues or multiple courtrooms to ensure required distancing and other safety precautions.

HB 2539 would not prohibit disclosure of juror names outside the courtroom, just provide minimal protection so the casual observer does not have immediate access in open court. And some jurisdictions in Oregon already use juror numbers in open court to refer to individual jurors. Others may use names from time to time. If HB 2539 passes, all courts will only use juror numbers in open court.

Thank you, and I am available if you have any questions.