

**Testimony of the Oregon State Bar in Support of SB 235  
Before the Senate Judiciary Committee**

January 30, 2023

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee:

My name is Tomás Hernandez. I am here today on behalf of the Oregon State Bar Board of Governors in support of SB 235, which proposes to add new judgeships in six judicial districts around Oregon.

The Oregon State Bar (OSB) is a public corporation and an instrumentality of the court with over 15,000 active members. The Oregon State Bar serves the public interest by: regulating the legal profession and improving the quality of legal services; supporting the judiciary and improving the administration of justice; and advancing a fair, inclusive and accessible justice system.

**Senate Bill 235**

The proper administration of justice is directly dependent on having a sufficient number of judges to manage the caseload presented. Significant consequences can result if there are not enough judges to perform the work before the court, including reduced quality of outcomes, risks to public safety, significant delays, increased costs to litigants and court resources, public dissatisfaction with the judicial system, and reduced job satisfaction of court officers and staff. A healthy economy is dependent on businesses and private parties having a means to resolve disputes in a timely and efficient manner.

In recent years courts throughout Oregon have taken numerous steps to handle more cases with fewer staff, including using specialty and treatment courts designed to streamline certain types of cases and meet the needs of certain unique populations. The transition to electronic filing and records management has also increased efficiency for litigants and the court. Despite these improvements, the increased caseloads that come with a growing state necessitate additional judgeships.

The Oregon State Bar strongly encourages the legislature to pass SB 235 in order to allow our court system to continue to provide the quality of service Oregonians deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.