



3/8/23

Dear Chair Debrow and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Colleen Regalbuto and I am Program Manager at Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center.

I am writing to ask for your support of SB600, which increases critical funding for Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center. **Six Rivers provides affordable mediation and training for our communities in Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam and Wheeler counties.** We also cover Klickitat and Skamania counties in Washington.

Six Rivers' core work is to help community members navigate conflict in an affordable way, during some of the most pressing issues of their lives. We receive critical funding, in part, through the Oregon Office of Community Dispute Resolution, located within the University of Oregon Law School. **Despite doubly increased caseloads at our center, priority requests from schools and community partners, this flat base funding has not increased to meet the need.**

Please support SB 600, to ensure that Six Rivers is sustainably funded to address the needs of our community members. **We help people resolve disputes quickly and affordably, help keep people housed, teach people how to constructively resolve problems with one another, all contributing to healthier, safer, and more peaceful communities.**

Our services are also affordable- we offer waivers and sliding scales to those who qualify, and never turn away anyone based on inability to pay.

This funding is critical for Six Rivers to continue to provide our core mediation and training services. In 2022, at Six Rivers:

- **90%** of clients felt respected by Six Rivers staff and mediators throughout the entire process.
- **96%** of clients felt that the mediation process was fair.
- After participating in mediation, **89%** felt confident they could handle a similar conflict in the future.
- Of cases that went to mediation, **about ¾ resulted in an agreement.**

Please see testimonial from a 2022 client:

"I am very grateful for this service and relieved to find it available during this difficult time in our society. [Mediators] were very complete, professional and "human" during the whole process."

– 2022 Mediation Client

Please support SB600 to sustainably fund our vital community work.

Sincerely,

Colleen Regalbuto

Program Manager and Mediator

Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center