

# OREGON LAW CENTER

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March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Chair Kropf  
Vice-Chairs Anderson and Wallan  
House Committee on Judiciary  
Oregon State Legislature

Re: Support for SB 306A

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Anderson and Wallan, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Katie Freimuth and I am a support staff at the Hillsboro Regional Office of Oregon Law Center. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 306A, which would establish a limited practice paraprofessional licensure program. This bill would help our client communities.

At the Oregon Law Center, I have two main roles in our office: 1.) I answer calls on our mainline to either intake or appropriately refer out, and 2.) I have a focus on family law and abuse prevention for which I provide support to our family law attorneys.

Often when I answer the phone, I am speaking to people who feel like they have no other options and are down to their last shred of hope. They have been turned away by the private bar because they could not afford the costs. They have been unsuccessful in being placed with an attorney through the Modest Means program either due to capacity limitations or because they are in poverty and can't afford the fees, even when on a sliding scale.

It is not uncommon for our office to have to turn folks away because of our own capacity limitations, or because they make too much for our services, but not enough to afford a private attorney. Once *we* turn folks away, their chance for equitable access to justice is now likely gone. I have listened to people cry and plead for assistance because literally no one else is able to help them, and they do not have the knowledge nor resources to navigate the court system themselves.

By creating a paraprofessional licensure program, myself and other Oregon Law Center support staff around the state will have the opportunity to better serve our communities by serving more folks than we are able to now. Additionally, paraprofessionals of the private sector can rise to meet the needs of the public, bridging that gap.

The need is great and burdensome to the justice system; paraprofessionals can lessen the load and make a positive impact on the lives of Oregonians. Please support SB 306A.

With deep respect,

Katie Freimuth  
Paralegal