

# The Commons Law Center

## **Kamron Graham**

*Executive Director*

Admitted in Oregon

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### ***Submitted via website***

#### **RE: Support for Senate Bill 306**

Dear Oregon State Legislature Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to you in support of Senate Bill 306 that amend the statutes surrounding the practice of law in Oregon and allow for licensed paralegals to practice law in a limited capacity in the areas of landlord-tenant and family law.

The Commons Law Center encounters hundreds of people a month seeking legal services, specifically in the areas of family law and tenant defense. Even with our sliding scale fees and growing staff, there are just too many people in need and we are forced to turn people. We operate at maximum capacity.

We see people everyday who appear pro se in some of the most critical legal matters. Imagine having to represent yourself while fighting for custody of your child and then losing your rights due to a technicality. Imagine going to a first appearance to fight an eviction and not know the process and ending up homeless. These scenarios happen every day – multiple times per day.

The data shows us that 80% of family law litigants appear without counsel. Those are the people that Senate Bill 306 is going to help. This change in statute will not grossly impact the revenue of family law or tenant attorneys. It will not shut down family law practices. It will not skew the average rate of \$320 per hour prices of. Simply put, this bill will allow for additional resources and access to justice to those who do not currently have it.

RE: [SUBJECT]

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The Oregon State Bar and its workgroups on licensing paralegals were extremely thoughtful in developing this project. It was led by retired judges, experts in adult education, experts in the subject matter areas. And most importantly, there was feedback sought from community members for whom would benefit from additional legal services. There was overwhelming support from low and middle income communities that they would utilize licensed paralegals as opposed to appearing pro se or not accessing their legal rights at all.

The Commons Law Center's mission and goal is to make legal services accessible, state wide. We are confident that the licensing of paralegals to practice in specific and limited capacity in landlord tenant and family law matters is a major positive step. As legal providers, we embrace the positive change Senate Bill 306 brings. We do not see the licensing of paralegals as taking away from our business but rather allowing for access to justice across the state.

We strongly encourage you to support Senate Bill 306 and make legal services more accessible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Kamron Graham', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kamron Graham, J.D.  
Executive Director