

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

For the record, I am Jackie Leung, Co-Chair of the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA).

OCAPIA works for the implementation and establishment of economic, social, legal, and political equity for Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in the state of Oregon and to maintain a continuing assessment of issues and needs confronting Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in this state. OCAPIA has several statutory duties, all of which revolve around advocacy and equity.

I am writing to you in support of SB 306, which will allow non-attorney associate members of the Oregon State Bar to practice law in specific practice areas.

Oregon prides itself as a state that examines issues with an equity lens. This is obvious in the work it does within the state, from the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division to support community-based organizations, the Oregon Employment Division to bring paid family leave for Oregonians, and the reorganization of Oregon's Medicaid program to ensure that low-income Oregonians have access to quality healthcare coverage. However, it is not as successful in its legal department.

It is no secret that seeking legal assistance is an expensive feat. The cost for an attorney is, on average, at least \$150 or more per hour, with the rate depending on the type of specialty and years of experience. Furthermore, there is a shortage of pro bono and low-cost attorneys to provide support for criminal law cases, which could affect someone's sixth amendment - the right to a speedy trial. In fact, as of January 2023, there were 77 defendants waiting in jail without legal representation.

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Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

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SB 306 will ensure that there is enough legal assistance for Oregonians who cannot afford the traditional attorney fees or who would otherwise be denied assistance from the Oregon Legal Aid due to the number of eligible clients, but not enough staff to cover the legal needs of the community. SB 306 will ensure that individuals and families have access to legal services from trained and specialized staff qualified to take limited-scope legal cases.

We strongly urge you to pass SB 306 to ensure that Oregonians have better access to representation.

Sincerely,



Jackie Leung
Co-Chair, Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

1. Green, A. (2023, January 6). Locked up with no lawyer: This is the reality for 77 defendants in Oregon today. *Oregon Live*. <https://www.oregonlive.com/news/2023/01/locked-up-with-no-lawyer-this-is-the-reality-for-77-defendants-in-oregon-today.html>



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