

**Testimony of the Oregon State Bar in Support of  
Senate Bill 1541  
Before the Senate Judiciary Committee  
February 6, 2024**

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee:

My name is Tomas Hernandez. I am here today on behalf of the Oregon State Bar Board of Governors in support of SB 1541 which proposes to add new judgeships in three 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 1541**

Senate Bill 1541 would create three new judgeships in Oregon. The bill would add one new judge in each of Jackson and Washington Counties beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year and would add one new judge in Clackamas County beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup> of 2025.

The proper administration of justice is dependent on having an adequate number of judges to manage the district's caseload. 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 supports the passage of SB 1541 in order to allow our court system to continue to provide the quality-of-service Oregonians deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.