



**Testimony before Joint Committee on Ways and
Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
In support of House Bill 5012**

February 27, 2025

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and members of the committee,

For the record my name is Myah Kehoe. I am an attorney in Portland and I am the current President of the Oregon State Bar. The mission of the Oregon State Bar is to serve justice and the public interest by promoting respect for the rule of law, by improving the quality of legal services, and by increasing access to justice. On behalf of the Bar's Board of Governors, I urge this committee to support full funding for the Oregon Judicial Department.

The Judicial Branch touches the lives of thousands of Oregonians every day. From supporting crime victims, to facilitating Oregon business and economic development, to resolving issues for families in crisis, Oregon courts are a critical part of what makes this state work. Our courts help to resolve disputes that may seem big or small from the outside, but are critical to people's lives.

Throughout the week, this committee has heard from OJD staff about a number of vital components of our justice system and how those impact the lives of Oregonians. One program of such importance to Oregonians is our statewide system of legal aid providers, which is funded in large part through HB 5012. These programs help people who need legal services the most access a system they cannot afford to access without this help.

Keren Farkas, the Director of the OSB Legal Services Program, is also testifying today about that program and about Policy Option Package 130, which would direct additional needed funding to both civil and immigration legal services. The Oregon State Bar is pleased to continue providing fiscal and regulatory oversight for Oregon's civil legal aid providers through the OSB Legal Services Program, and we look forward to continuing that relationship long into the future.

Finally, I would like to offer our support for two additional programs which are important to the Bar and its licensees - the Oregon Law Commission and the Council on Court Procedures – both of which are funded through SB 5012. Both of these groups have served the Oregon the Oregon legal community for decades and we hope both are able to continue to do so for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Myah Kehoe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Myah Kehoe
President, Oregon State Bar Board of Governors