

# OREGON TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

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Testimony of Arthur Towers

OTLA Political Director

**In Support of House Bill 3265**

Before the House Committee on Judiciary

March 25, 2021

Chair Bynum and Members of Committee,

OTLA members represent victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence and we strongly support the passage of HB 2400. One of our core values as an organization is promoting the access and availability of records to the public. Another core value of OTLA is protecting the rights of victims in the legal process and achieving justice. HB 2400 is a commonsense, reasonable approach that would allow the victim access to records and information that relate to them and their case.

We have been generally concerned this session at numerous pieces of legislation that have aimed to reduce the availability of records by state agencies and local governments. That is why we are proud to support bills that promote access, like HB 2400. The goal of the legislation is simply to clarify that a victim of sexual assault or domestic violence should not face barriers in to access records about them.

Even though the victim would have the chance to appeal the denial of a records request, this still crates an unnecessary, stressful step to accessing the information. The first priority should be to protect the rights of victims and protect their access to the process. Keeping the victim in the dark related to their case does the exact opposite of that.

We thank the proponents for bringing this important piece of legislation forward, and urge a YES vote on HB 2400.