

Disability Rights Oregon Supports Vital Funding for the Work of the Oregon Judicial Department

Disability rights and other civil rights laws are rooted in a fundamental ideal: that every person, irrespective of their inherent differences, is equal—regardless of where we come from, how we worship, how we look, who we love, or whether we have a disability. Honoring our common humanity is a foundation for our vision of the world. DRO has served over 4,384 people in the past 2 years. We help people with disabilities with their disability-related legal issues. We also file class action lawsuits on behalf of people with disabilities to enforce their civil rights in a number of different settings. Here are some of the lawsuits we have recently filed:

Foster Care Lawsuit

This case is a class action lawsuit filed against the state including Department of Human Services (“DHS”). We decided to file this lawsuit due to DHS’ failure to create a safe foster care system.

Lawsuit: State Required to Limit Use of Sheltered Workshops

In 2012, we filed the first U.S. class action lawsuit to challenge sheltered workshops that pay people with intellectual and developmental disabilities less than the minimum wage.

Lawsuit: Making Sure Children Attend a Full Day of School

This federal class action lawsuit was filed to force the state to play a larger role in making sure that school districts are equipped to support children with disabilities in their classrooms.

Providing Restorative Treatment when Unable to Aid and Assist in Defense

The Ninth Circuit ruled in *Oregon Advocacy Center v. Mink* that the state psychiatric hospital must accept within seven days people found to not have the mental capacity to stand trial because they are unable to help their attorney defend them in court—what is called "aid and assist."

Lawsuit: Protecting In-Home Care Hours

In April 2017, we filed suit against the Oregon Department of Human Services after the agency implemented across-the-board cuts to in-home care services for adults and children with developmental disabilities.

This work has fundamentally changed the lives of Oregonians with disabilities. So much of our work requires us to seek justice through the Oregon Judicial Department. Our court system often is called upon to directly intervene on behalf of people with disabilities in life or death situations. Without adequate funding OJD will not be able to respond to urgent

circumstances. Without sufficient funding for OJD, justice is delayed and unfair treatment continues. The Oregon Judicial Department is a vital partner in protecting the civil rights of Oregonians with Disabilities. We need timely access to our court system and that access requires the funding needed to have enough judges, courtrooms, public defense services and all the vital support staff throughout OJD. During COVID-19 our court system has been profoundly impacted. As we emerge from this pandemic, our back log of cases is at a crisis level. These cases represent people's lives on hold waiting for justice. DRO strongly supports an increase in the OJD budget so Oregonians do not have to wait for the justice they deserve. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any question regarding DRO position regarding funding for OJD please contact Meghan Moyer at 503-432-5777.

