

**Oregon State Bar Diversity Section
Support for HB 2176
Before The Senate Committee on Judiciary
And Ballot Measure 110 Implementation**

April 21, 2021

Chair Prozanski and members of the Committee:

The Mission of the Oregon State Bar Diversity Section is to promote and support diversity and inclusion within the Oregon Bar and the judiciary, to organize educational programs that facilitate constructive discussion and enhanced understanding of diversity issues, and to assist Oregon legal professionals in advancing equity in the practice of law. We write today in support of HB 2176 because it advances equity in the practice of law.

Oregon courts impose fines in connection with convictions for a variety of offenses, including for minor offenses like traffic violations. These fines disproportionately affect Oregonians of color, who are more likely to be cited, convicted, and fined than white Oregonians. In addition, these fines fall more heavily on the shoulders of low-income Oregonians. A \$250 speeding ticket might be an annoyance for higher-income driver but can be catastrophic for a driver living below the poverty line.

We support HB 2176 because it gives Oregon courts the flexibility to set payment plan fees at a level that will reduce barriers for low-income Oregonians, rather than setting a one-size-fits-all minimum fee.

We also support HB 2176 because it would expand the Oregon Judicial Department's authority to compromise old debts. Under current law, OJD cannot compromise any part of a judgment that includes restitution. Recognizing that fines and restitution serve different purposes, HB 2176 protects victim's rights by preserving the bar in compromising restitution while giving OJD discretion to compromise and settle non-restitution fines.

HB 2176 would advance equity in the practice of law. We hope you will support its passage.