

May 10, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
Education Subcommittee of the Joint Ways and Means
Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301



Marcus J. Swift
Attorney

Dear Co-chairs Frederick and McLain and committee members,

I write to request that you please fund Dispute Resolution which provides for reduced-to-no cost community dispute resolution services across the state through the Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution (OOCDR). As a private practitioner of landlord-tenant law in Wasco, Hood River, Sherman, Gilliam and Umatilla Counties, Overland Law, LLC, wholeheartedly supports Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center's services.

I took a leap of faith and founded my solo law practice in the fall of 2019 as a different kind of law firm. I focus on access to justice issues around landlord-tenant law by providing significant pro bono consultations and representation for tenants. I also represent smaller "mom-and-pop" landlords in the area. Oftentimes I receive a phone call for a situation where it is obvious that more lawyers and further escalation is not in the best interest of any of the parties – or the community.

Our community faces a crisis in access to justice due to the high volume of retiring legal practitioners in the area. At the same time, existing, established firms, charge massive retainers and hourly rates. The average person living in the Columbia River Gorge is often left without help. That's exactly why Six Rivers DRC is so crucial to our community. In our region, there are no other formal resources for conflict resolution outside of the court system; Six Rivers' programs fill an important need.

I frequently refer community members to Six Rivers and I look forward to continuing to do so in the future. As landlords and tenants both struggle to pay their expenses, Six Rivers DRC provides a forum for them to discuss realistic and necessary solutions to their shared dilemmas. Six Rivers DRC emphasizes workable solutions so that community members can build towards stable living situations.

I am a vocal advocate for Six Rivers in our community and on social media. I have been honored to work with their volunteer mediators regarding recent updates to Oregon landlord-tenant law and I'm exciting to continue working with them in the future. The staff of Six Rivers is knowledgeable, compassionate, friendly, and darn good at what they do. That's why I support their grant application to the Oregon Office of Community of Dispute Resolution. Please do not hesitate to contact me regarding our support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marcus J. Swift".

Overland Law, LLC
Marcus J. Swift
Founder & Managing Attorney