

**Testimony of the Oregon State Bar
in Support of HB 4120
before
the House Judiciary Committee**

February 1, 2022

Chair Bynum, and members of the Committee,

The mission of the Oregon State Bar is to regulate the legal profession and improve the quality of legal services; support the judiciary and improve the administration of justice; and advance a fair, inclusive and accessible justice system.

As an instrumentality of Oregon's courts with a commitment to protecting the public, the Oregon State Bar supports the Oregon Judicial Department's efforts to promote greater access to justice, increase procedural clarity, and respond to the changing nature of court processes through the statutory modifications found in HB 4120.

HB 4120 makes a number of modification to court processes and continues the court's focus on fines and fees. Currently, Oregon judges have the ability to waive fines and fees for felonies and misdemeanors; however they do not have that same authority for violations. Sections 1 and 2 of the bill would provide judges that same discretion and ability to waive a minimum fine for violations as well, ensuring a consistent process. By establishing a consistent process while increasing flexibility, judges and defendants have an opportunity to work together for a greater chance of success in meeting financial responsibilities.

In sections 4-6 the bill simplifies procedural requirements by clarifying the filing fees process for protective proceedings and small estate matters. These clarifications will streamline the process for litigants and provide a clearer path forward.

Under Section 8, the Chief Justice would have the tools at his or her disposal to respond to the changing needs of the court system. The bill would allow electronic as well as in person appearances while providing flexibility for courts, communities, and litigants after the state of emergency has ended.

The Oregon State Bar supports the passage of HB 4120. The changes made in this bill will allow the Oregon Judicial Department to increase access to the court system for Oregonians while continuing its focus on procedural clarity and the administration of justice.