



Dear Chair Sollman, Chair Smith and Members of the Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee:

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Library Association (OLA). Our association serves to provide resources and opportunities for advocacy, education, leadership, and collaborations, in order to continually strengthen Oregon's libraries and the communities they serve. OLA's nearly 1,000 members include law librarians working in Oregon's county law libraries. We support the Oregon Judicial Department's (OJD) budget as it currently stands in SB 5512, which includes desperately needed increased funding for county law libraries. These libraries are critical public institutions that are often the last refuge for those who can't get legal help elsewhere.

Law libraries are not immune to the increased operational costs all libraries now experience, including salary and benefits, materials, and online resource subscriptions. Sufficient funding is needed to provide necessary library services to non-lawyers, solo practitioners, and others who need no-cost access to legal materials. These legal materials are helping community members trying to solve issues related to custody and parenting time enforcement; landlord evictions; unemployment benefits; how to issue and respond to protective orders; and probate administration. Attorneys rely on county law libraries too, especially those outside the metro area. For solo and small firm lawyers across the state, the law library provides access to legal information resources they can't afford on their own, as well as to materials on subjects outside their practice area.

Over the last 12 years, there has been a freeze in the amount of funding that the state has provided to support library services and increased funding is essential to keep services available. OLA supports the robust funding of Oregon Judicial Department's proposed budget and recognizes it is a step in the right direction to meeting the long-term sustainable budgets that will keep law libraries open and services accessible to vulnerable Oregonians in our communities. By maintaining these free, specialized public libraries that provide authoritative legal resources, law librarian expertise, and tools to connect laypeople with attorneys, we help ensure access to justice for all people of Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration. Please maintain the additional funding for county law libraries in the final budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brittany Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brittany Young

OLA Vice President/President-Elect

olavp@olaweb.org