



March 8, 2023

Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Subcommittee on Public Safety
RE: SB 5512

Executive Director
Erin Esparza

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Dear Co-Chairs Sollman and Evans and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Classroom Law Project, and with the support of our Board of Directors, I am writing to strongly urge you to support fully funding the Oregon Judicial Department in order to ensure that all Oregonians have access to a judicial system that truly provides them with recourse through fair, timely, and efficient resolution of disputes.

As you know, the mission of Classroom Law Project is to prepare Oregon's students to become active, engaged, and informed participants in our democratic society. This purpose is driven by our deeply-held belief that the effective functioning of *each* of our institutions and branches is critical to ensuring a free and just society that protects the rights of all citizens, and provides equitable opportunities for them to pursue their aspirations for themselves and their families.

However, at the same time that we are striving to instill in our young people an understanding of, respect for, and commitment to our system of government, the effective functioning of Oregon's court system has been put at risk by a continued lack of sufficient funding for critical components of its operations. This has resulted in a pressing need for increased support and investment in key areas such as equitable compensation for judges, the ability to recruit and retain qualified attorneys to represent all Oregonians through our public defense system, raising juror compensation to increase participation so that we are truly providing a jury of peers, adding staff and technology resources in order to deliver timely access to justice, and funding the construction and maintenance of adequate and secure court facilities

We support Chief Justice Flynn's budget recommendations that will allow for full access to timely and responsive court services of all Oregonians who seek them. While recognizing that you face many difficult choices and tradeoffs during the 2023 session, I ask that you ensure the adequate funding of this critical function of government and core democratic institution.

Sincerely,



Erin Esparza
Executive Director

Classroom Law Project is a non-profit organization of individuals, educators, lawyers, and civic leaders building strong communities by teaching students to become active citizens.