

March 8, 2023

Dear Chair Debrow and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Bill Lennox, former Wasco County Commissioner and current board member of Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center in the Columbia River Gorge.

I am writing to ask for your support of SB600, which increases critical funding for Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center. Six Rivers provides mediation and training for our communities in Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam and Wheeler counties. They also cover Klickitat and Skamania counties in Washington.

Six Rivers core work is to help community members navigate conflict in an affordable way, during some of the most pressing issues of their lives. They receive critical funding, in part, through the Oregon Office of Community Dispute Resolution, located within the University of Oregon Law School. Despite doubly increased caseloads, priority requests from schools and community partners, this flat base funding has not increased to meet the need.

Please support SB 600, to ensure that Six Rivers is sustainably funded to address the needs of our community members. They help people resolve disputes faster and cheaper than courts, help keep people housed, teach people how to constructively resolve problems with one another, contributing to healthier, safer, and more peaceful communities. This funding is critical for Six Rivers to continue to provide the core mediation and training services that they do.

As a former law enforcement executive and Wasco County Commissioner I am very aware of the benefits that dispute resolutions centers offer in our communities.

Please support SB600 to sustainably fund the vital community work they do so well.

Sincerely,

Bill Lennox
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