



April 27, 2023

Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

On behalf of the Oregon Association of Defense Counsel (“OADC”), we offer our strong support of SB 233. OADC is an organization of approximately 550 lawyers in the State of Oregon who devote a significant portion of their practice to the defense of civil litigation.

Our organization has long believed that judicial salaries in this state must be increased to attract the most qualified and talented members of the Bar to judicial appointments. When adjusted for cost of living, Oregon’s salary for circuit court judges is currently 50th in the country. These salaries simply do not match the responsibilities of the position. Quite frankly, it is embarrassing that we are last in the nation in compensating our judiciary.

Furthermore, only one third of Oregon Judicial Department judges have been on the bench 10 years or more, and almost 40% have served less than five years. Because of the complexity and demands of the job, retaining, training, and recruiting judges is essential. SB 233 will increase the annual salaries of the Justices of the Supreme Court and Judges of the Court of Appeals, Circuit Courts, and Oregon Tax Court, making it more likely to attract judges who understand the civil justice system, especially complex civil cases. This is extremely important and necessary to promote the judiciary and advance the interests of the Civil Bar.

Thank you for your consideration of OADC’s input on this important bill.

Sincerely,

OADC Government Affairs Committee

Peter Tuenge – President, OADC

Heather Bowman – President-Elect, OADC

Dan Larsen – Secretary/Treasurer, OADC

Lloyd Bernstein – Chair, OADC Government Affairs Committee

Molly Marcum

Daniel Schanz

Maureen McGee (Lobbyist)