

**Testimony in support of HB 5012
on behalf of the
Oregon Law Commission
February 27, 2025**

Co-Chair Broadman, Co-Chair Evans, for the record, my name is Valerie Sasaki and I serve as the Chair of the Oregon Law Commission (OLC).

The Commission is funded as a pass-through entity in the Oregon Judicial Department's budget and we appreciate the support and assistance of Oregon's judges and lawyers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5012 for the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD), and to recognize the important role the Judicial Branch plays in the lives of Oregonians. In addition, I would like to specifically share the Commission's support for the proposed 2025 – 2027 budget for the Oregon Law Commission and POP 127, which would increase funding for the Commission by \$50,000 a biennium.

Who we are: The Oregon Law Commission is the only non-partisan, legislatively affiliated law-reform organization in the State of Oregon. Our mission is to review, revise, and re-envision Oregon state laws that are not operating as efficiently, justly, and for the benefit of Oregonians as they should be.

The Commission is composed of 15 members that include appointees from the legislative assembly, governor, attorney general, the Oregon State Bar, the three Oregon law schools, and three members of the judiciary. The Commission is housed at the University of Oregon School of Law. Over the nearly 30-year history of the Commission, OLC workgroups have drafted dozens of successful bills on a wide variety of topics ranging from probate reform to bankruptcy to criminal appeals. Due to this diligence, and the great fortune of our partnership with the professionals in the Office of Legislative Counsel, Law Commission bills have greater than an 89% passage rate since 1999.

The Commission operates using the expertise of Oregon attorneys and other professionals who volunteer their time, often over the course of several years, to draft bills that are frequently exceptionally complex and require a high level of detailed scrutiny. The Commission's process goes to great lengths to seek partnership and scrutiny from all sides of a given topic and works on a consensus-based model whenever possible to ensure that there is strong support for the policies the Commission brings to the legislature.

Policy Option Package 127: This year the Commission submitted POP 127 through OJD's budget process. POP 127 would increase the Commission's current budget by \$50,000 a biennium. The additional funds, coupled with the Commission's proposed Current Service Level budget of \$389,786, would be used to support research assistants, fellows, and administrative support.

Although the Commission's budget has increased a little over 10% between the beginning of the 2017 – 2019 biennium (when the Commission moved to the University of Oregon) and the beginning of the 2023 – 2025 biennium, the increase in funding has not kept up with inflation. With two, possibly three, workgroups starting this year, additional funding for the Commission will allow the workgroups to increase their efficiency and effectiveness while providing undergraduates and law students an introduction to Oregon's legislative process.

Current Projects: This session, the Commission introduced two bills, House Bill 2460, which updates the municipal and justice court appeals process, and Senate Bill 164, which modernizes Oregon's LLC Act. In both workgroups, the Commission had the benefit of members who are experts in their fields. Workgroup members commit hundreds of hours to each project. If adopted, each bill will provide greater clarity, accessibility, and consistency to Oregon's legal landscape.

On behalf of the Oregon Law Commission, we sincerely appreciate the continued support of this committee and the Legislative Assembly. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5012, the Oregon Law Commission's proposed Current Service Level Budget, and POP 127. I am happy to answer any questions.