



Dear Chair Broadman, Chair Evans and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public:

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Library Association (OLA) in regard to HB 5012. Our association serves to provide resources and opportunities for advocacy, education, leadership, and collaborations 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 county law library service providers' ask of a \$2.8 million increase from the Oregon Judicial Department's (OJD) proposed \$8.7 million budget for county law library services in HB 5012, to the \$11.5 million calculated from county law libraries to maintain services at the current status quo. Additionally, we support the ask for Chief Justice Flynn to consult county law libraries for the distribution instead of percentage of filing fees. 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, probate administration, consumer/debt issues and much more. Attorneys rely on county law libraries too, especially those outside the metro areas. 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 continuing legal education and subjects outside their practice area.

Over the past 14 years, state funding for library services has remained stagnant, with the exception of two increases in the last biennium. Ensuring continued access to these vital services preserves free and unfettered access to legal information - a cornerstone of an informed and educated society. We urge you to support the county law library service providers' request for a \$2.8 million increase, ensuring county law libraries receive the necessary \$11.5 million to sustain their essential services. Additionally, we ask for your support in advocating for Chief Justice Flynn to collaborate directly with county law libraries in determining fund distribution. Your leadership on this issue will help protect access to critical legal resources for 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.

Sincerely,

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

Ayn Frazee  
OLA President  
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