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Thursday, February 27, 2025

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB5012.

The Oregon Trial Lawyers Association is a statewide membership association of attorneys who represent people who have been harmed by government, insurance companies, corporations and other powerful special interests. Our members fight for underdogs – injured workers, consumers who have experienced fraud or injuries, people whose insurers unlawfully deny their claims, employees discriminated against by their employer, sexual assault survivors, kids abused in foster care, tenants facing eviction. Our members fight to defend their access to the civil justice system and their right to a trial by jury.

Oregonians who use the court system are often experiencing one of the worst events of their life (victimization from a crime, loss of a loved one, severe life-altering injuries, eviction). Their access to justice depends, in part, on a well-staffed and well-resourced judicial department. We need a talented, diverse, experienced judiciary to make sure that Oregonians get the fair treatment they deserve.

We realize budgets are tight and the current dynamics at the federal level make funding sources less certain. And we are sensitive about the variety of needs in the judicial system, much less the rest of state government. It is paramount to fund our third branch so all those needing the court system have confidence in the system and get the most timely, efficient and fair treatment.

We know Chief Justice Flynn, all the judges at the appellate and state court level as well as the staff have put careful thought and planning into the needs and priorities of the people they serve. We support their budget requests and urge you to provide the resources they need to effectively and efficiently help Oregonians involved in our judicial system. We would like to specifically identify a couple critical programs.



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POP 101 will improve courthouse security, which is crucial for people seeking justice in the courts, attorneys, judges, and court staff. Currently, many courthouses do not have security screening at their entrances, and people can easily bring weapons inside. Many courts also have little or no law enforcement presence. POP 101 will address this by increasing the number of courts with security screening and adding staff to OJD's Marshall's office.

POPs 109 and 113 will provide courts with the technology they need to ensure access to justice for Oregonians. For example, remote proceedings can be convenient, accessible and efficient for court users and attorneys, but they require ongoing investments in equipment, software, support and technical expertise. Modern court technology also ensures efficient operations of our courts without service interruptions. We must provide the necessary resources for these programs.

Sincerely,

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