

Amanda Bryan

amanda.bryan.attorney@gmail.com
16044 SW Langer Dr.
Sherwood, OR 97140
503-680-5377

Senate Committee on Judiciary
900 Court St. NE, S-413
Salem, Oregon 97301

February 28, 2015

RE: Testimony in support of SB 913

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 913, which seeks to amend ORS 51.020 by removing provisions that prohibit a county court or board of county commissioners from establishing a justice of the peace district that includes the county seat or a city where a circuit court regularly holds court. This bill addresses a significant issue of fairness and representation in our justice system.

Currently, residents of the county seat are subject to the jurisdiction of the justice court but are denied the right to vote for the Justice of the Peace or serve on a jury. This means that individuals living in cities like Salem are always under the jurisdiction of the justice court but have no say in choosing who presides over it. Furthermore, when it comes to jury trials, these residents are judged by peers from other areas, such as Stayton and Sublimity, which may not be demographically representative of their community. This quirk in the statutes undermines the principle of local governance and community involvement in the justice system.

SB 913 offers a straightforward solution to this issue without altering the powers of the Justice Courts. By allowing justice of the peace districts to include the county seat, this bill ensures that everyone subject to the justice court's jurisdiction can participate in the democratic process of electing the Justice of the Peace. Moreover, it provides an opportunity for residents of the county seat to serve on juries, ensuring that trials are conducted by a jury of peers who are more representative of the community.

This change would enhance accountability within the justice system by making it more responsive to the needs and values of the entire community, not just parts of it. It would foster better community relations with justice institutions by ensuring that everyone has a voice in how justice is administered locally. Furthermore, it would improve access to justice by making the system more inclusive and representative.

In conclusion, SB 913 is a necessary step towards creating a more equitable and inclusive justice system in Oregon. It aligns with the principles of good governance by ensuring that all individuals subject to the justice court's jurisdiction have a say in its operations. I urge you to support this bill and take a crucial step towards enhancing democracy and fairness in our local courts.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Bryan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Amanda Bryan