



March 3, 2025

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
Committee on the Judiciary  
Oregon State Senate  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon, 97301

Chair Prozanski and members of the Committee,

I am writing today to support Senate Bill 193, which aims to rectify a historical oversight in Oregon's justice of the peace districts. As you may recall from other testimony, state law prohibits some counties (including Marion) from including **any part of the city that serves as the county seat** in their justice of peace districts.

Perhaps this separation of court jurisdictions seemed logical at one point, but in modern practice it has led to a not insignificant practice of disenfranchisement. For example, here in Marion County, residents of the City of Salem are not considered part of the Justice Court District, which means they are **never eligible to participate in the election of the justice or be selected for jury pools**. However, under Oregon law, we are **always subject to the jurisdiction of the Justice Court**.

As an example of how this plays out every day, a significant portion of the eviction cases heard by the Marion County Justice Court originate within the City of Salem. However, the tenant who appears in that proceeding is not facing a jury of peers representative from the Salem community but rather individuals from communities such as Sublimity, Stayton, or other incorporated parts of Marion County. Even more problematic, in my opinion, is the inability of that tenant to participate in the selection of the Justice of the Peace hearing her case. **As a resident of the county, she must answer to the court and its jury; as a resident of the county seat, she cannot raise her vote for the Justice of the Peace or sit in the jury herself.**

Allowing someone in this kind of situation to face a jury of their peer community members is good government. So too is allowing the residents of the county seat to vote for the Justice of the Peace who hears a considerable amount of civil, violations, and eviction cases impacting city residents. As the Marion County Justice Court says: *"The goal of Justice Court is to provide quick, accessible, inexpensive access to justice."* Please consider SB193 as a way of ensuring that the foundational elements of this court - including jury representation/membership and voting for the Justice of the Peace - are available to all in our county.

**Please note:** I offer this testimony on my own accord, as the City of Salem has not taken an official position on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Tigan".

Paul Tigan  
City of Salem Councilor, Ward 1

