



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 913
SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
MARCH 3, 2025**

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mae Lee Browning, Legislative Director of the Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. I submit this testimony on behalf of OCDLA in support of SB 913.

OCDLA's 1,200 members statewide include public defense providers, private bar attorneys, investigators, experts, and law students. Our attorneys represent Oregon's children and parents in juvenile dependency proceedings, youth in juvenile delinquency proceedings, adults in criminal proceedings at the trial and appellate level, as well as civil commitment proceedings throughout the state of Oregon. Our mission is championing justice, promoting individual rights, and supporting the legal defense community through education and advocacy.

SB 913 would allow all of the citizens subject to a Justice Court's power to participate in selecting a Justice and to serve on a Justice Court Jury. Currently, the statute disenfranchises vast swaths of Oregon's population. And, because the excluded population is demographically distinct from the people who are allowed to participate, it renders the jury pool unrepresentative of the county as a whole.

It is critically important for a person to have a jury of their peers. "Jurors are community members with diverse experiences and backgrounds who better reflect the 'conscience of the community.'"¹ Jury trials provide the voice of common sense and the perspective of citizens in the justice system. "Unrepresentative juries not only exclude and marginalize communities of color, they also produce wrongful convictions and unfair sentences that disproportionately burden Black people and people of color."²

Serving on a jury is the most direct and impactful way for citizens to participate in the process of governing. It ties citizens to the constitution and makes jurors feel part of something larger than themselves.

Please vote YES on SB 913, a good government solution that will enfranchise thousands of Oregonians, and make our juries more representative of our state.

Mae Lee Browning
Legislative Director
Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

¹ <https://eji.org/report/race-and-the-jury/why-representative-juries-are-necessary/#chapter-2>

² <https://eji.org/report/race-and-the-jury/>