

Date:	March 24, 2025
To:	Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, Members of the Judiciary Committee
From:	Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager Tim Dooley
Subject:	Support SB 1175

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB 1175. For the record, I am Tim Dooley, on behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), representing Oregon's county governments.

Counties believe that access to justice is an important issue and support this task force bill to examine ways to remove barriers to jury service. County operated justice courts are the lowest level of trial court in the state and exist as a way to ensure that smaller, but still important cases, such as small claims, are given their day in court and access to a jury trial if needed.

While jury trials in justice court are uncommon, they face the same issues as their colleagues in municipal and circuit courts as to the jury pool and willingness to serve. Removing barriers to this foundational aspect of the judicial system will improve the ability of courts to hear cases and administer justice.

The Judicial Department has found that requests for excusals have risen every year since 2017, and that nearly a third of those summoned for jury duty do not respond. One of the features of this bill is to create strategies around improving public education and outreach about jury service. Combined with a focus on compensation, this task force will create a plan towards improving civic engagement with this crucial aspect of our justice system.

We urge your support for SB 1175.