

**Senate Committee on Judiciary
Testimony in Support of HB 2463 with Pending Amendments
4/15/2025**

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

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2463 with its pending amendments, which would extend the answer period in small claims court from 14 days to 30 days.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. Consumer-related challenges such as fraud, unfair debt collection, and predatory lending disproportionately impact those struggling to make ends meet. OLC is committed to supporting efforts to remove systemic barriers to justice for our client communities.

HB 2463 with its pending amendments will help consumers have better access to justice in small claims court proceedings. The bill with its amendments will improve the small claims court process in two key ways:

1. **Clarification of Small Claims Jurisdictional Amount:** The base bill explicitly includes prejudgment or pre-award interest, fees, and other costs in the calculation of the jurisdictional amount required to request a jury trial. Including prejudgment or pre-award interest, fees, and costs in the jurisdictional amount ensures transparency for litigants. This clarification reduces confusion about whether these amounts are part of the claim total when determining eligibility for a jury trial.
1. **Extended Defendant Response Time:** The pending amendments extend the timeframe for defendants to respond to a claim from 14 days to 30 days. This extra time will provide defendants with a more reasonable opportunity to review claims, seek advice, gather evidence, and prepare an appropriate response. A longer response period can lead to more informed participation by both parties, potentially reducing defaults and fostering better outcomes.

By clarifying procedural rules and providing more time for responses, HB 2463 with its amendments will remove barriers that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals who may struggle with legal processes. The bill represents a thoughtful step toward improving Oregon's small claims court system. By addressing ambiguities in jurisdictional calculations and extending response times for defendants, this bill enhances fairness and accessibility while maintaining the efficiency of small claims proceedings.

The Oregon Law Center urges your support for HB 2463 with its pending amendments. Thank you for your consideration, and we are happy to answer any questions or provide additional information as needed.

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