

Submitter: Heather Cary

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5525

Senator Janeen Sollman

Representative Ricki Ruiz

Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

Oregon State Capitol

900 Court Street

Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 5525 –Fully Fund Dispute Resolution

Dear Senator Sollman and Representative Ruiz and Members of the Committee.

Our state has many important funding priorities, including investing in programs that are proven to show that they help to empower people, build resilient communities, and save the state millions of dollars in other costs. Resolution Oregon does exactly that.

I write today in support of Community Dispute Resolution, which passes through Resolution Oregon at the University of Oregon and helps to provide valuable education and mediation services all across the State.

I have seen firsthand the positive impact that community dispute resolution creates in my community. I've mediated with Small Claims, Community Mediation, Landlord and Tenant and now Family Mediation through Clackamas and Multnomah Counties. I've seen so many individuals and families learn conflict resolution skills, become better neighbors, avoid going to court, make child-centered plans with their co-parent and stay housed, to summarize. This work is vital to helping unclog the courts and to give people opportunities to resolve disputes in a way that improves their lives.

Resolution Oregon's statewide network provides conflict resolution education for youth and adult community members, mediation services, and connects people to local support service providers (e.g., financial resources, legal aid, rehousing & credit counseling). For more than 40 years, these services have shown to help communities improve graduation rates, reduce crime recidivism rates, and resolve disputes faster and cheaper than courts. These preventative services help reduce community costs for incarceration, health care, associated court costs, and keep people housed who are at risk of foreclosure and eviction.

Please help our vulnerable community members by investing in cost-effective mediation services that are complementary to other avenues for justice. Please fully fund Dispute Resolution in the Statewide Programs section of SB 5525.

Thank you for your service to our state.

Best,

Heather Cary