

Submitter: Lindsay Christensen

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5525

Chairperson, Members of the Committee:

My name is Lindsay Christensen, and I'm a community mediation practitioner and program coordinator working in Portland, Oregon. I'm writing today to urge your support for full funding of Oregon's community dispute resolution programs, as included in SB 5525.

For over 40 years, Oregon has invested in a model of community-based mediation that is both accessible and locally grounded. These services offer residents across the state a low-barrier, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive option for resolving conflict—one that complements, rather than competes with, other forms of justice. In Portland, I've seen firsthand how this work strengthens neighborhoods, reduces reliance on law enforcement and courts, and builds durable skills for navigating conflict in homes, workplaces, schools, and beyond.

In my work, I support individuals, families, and organizations through some of the most challenging moments they face—disputes between neighbors, workplace tensions, multi-generational conflicts, and community harm. These are not abstract policy issues; they are real human experiences. Community mediation creates the conditions for people to be heard, to hear each other, and to find resolution outside of adversarial processes.

This work is especially vital now. As economic and social pressures increase, so do stress, disconnection, and polarization. Mediation services help bridge these divides, reduce harm, and restore relationships—often for those who have the fewest resources and the greatest need.

But this work isn't possible without state support. Resolution Oregon's network of providers depends on consistent and adequate public funding to meet growing demand. Without full funding, communities across Oregon—particularly those in rural and underserved areas—risk losing access to these critical services.

Please support full funding for community dispute resolution in SB 5525. Your investment in these programs is an investment in community health, safety, and resilience.

With gratitude for your time and service,

Lindsay Christensen
Portland, Oregon