

House Committee on Judiciary
Testimony of John Devlin on SB 179A
April 24, 2025

Chair Kropf, Vice Chair Wallan, Vice Chair Chotzen and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today. My name is John Devlin. I am a mediator and civil rights attorney, and I also serve as Co-Chair of the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association's Legislative Committee. OTLA members use the civil justice system to fight for the rights of injured people. Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on SB 179A.

OTLA is neutral on this bill, which makes permanent the changes to the recreational immunity statute that were passed last year. Those changes were the result of extensive negotiations among various stakeholders. While OTLA was not happy with the changes, we reached a compromise that we could live with. One of those compromises was a sunset provision.

After the 2024 session, Senator Prozanski convened a workgroup to consider further changes to the recreational immunity statute. That workgroup process did not result in any additional recommendations. As a result, Senator Prozanski came into this session with the intent of simply removing the sunset provision and making the changes permanent. The bill unanimously passed out of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, and the full Senate passed the bill with 30 votes in favor.

I know that some of the supporters of this bill have asked in their testimony for additional changes to the bill. However, other supporters recognize that this bill is the result of an extensive negotiation process and should be passed without additional changes. OTLA would oppose any changes to SB 179.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon. I am happy to answer any questions that you might have.