

Written Testimony of Desmond Stinnie

Chairman, Dealing With Debt

In Support of HB 4141

Chair Sosa, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of HB 4141.

My name is Desmond Stinnie, and I serve as Chairman of Dealing With Debt, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that operates a judgment-free online social community designed to help individuals reduce financial stress and regain stability. Through clear guidance, practical tools, and community-based learning, members of our platform receive financial education and peer support wherever they are on their financial journey. Our mobile app, MoneySense, is available free of charge to anyone in the United States.

From our perspective, consumers deserve access to all lawful and well-regulated avenues of debt relief. No single solution fits every household or every hardship. A healthy consumer protection framework should expand safe options, not restrict them.

That principle is especially important in today's environment.

In 2025, more than 4,300 Oregonians filed for personal bankruptcy. That increase signals that many households have reached a breaking point. When financial distress reaches a certain level, principal reduction is often necessary to create a realistic path forward.

At present, bankruptcy is effectively the only widely available mechanism in Oregon that provides principal reduction at scale. HB 4141 would change that by establishing a regulated framework for debt resolution services, giving consumers an additional option before they reach the point of no return.

To be clear, debt settlement is not the right solution for everyone. Some consumers are better served by bankruptcy. Others may benefit from nonprofit credit counseling or debt management plans. But for individuals carrying high unsecured balances across multiple accounts, debt resolution can be a viable and appropriate alternative.

During the February 10, 2026 hearing on HB 4141, one observation stood out.

Much of the testimony reflected what appeared to be a marketplace debate — with representatives from the bankruptcy and credit counseling industries on one side, and representatives of the debt settlement industry on the other. That dynamic is understandable. Each of those sectors operates within the broader debt relief ecosystem and has a stake in how that marketplace evolves.

However, bankruptcy attorneys and nonprofit credit counselors already operate freely in Oregon. They are established participants in the state's debt relief framework. The question before this Committee is not whether those industries should continue to serve Oregonians — they already do.

The central question is whether an additional, regulated option can be implemented safely and responsibly for Oregonians. It already has been implemented in most states across the country.

Dealing With Debt approaches this issue differently. As a nonprofit organization serving consumers nationwide, including Oregonians, we are agnostic as to the type of relief an individual ultimately chooses. Bankruptcy serves an important purpose. Credit counseling serves an important purpose. Debt settlement can serve an important purpose.

More safe options expand consumer agency. Fewer options restrict it.

Legislators should not be placed in the position of refereeing competition between industries. The guiding standard should be whether HB 4141 establishes a framework that protects Oregonians while expanding access to lawful financial relief.

Our support for this bill is informed by the lived experience of the individuals we serve. Those individuals have used all forms of relief — including debt settlement — to regain stability. Some now serve as volunteer coaches on our MoneySense platform, providing mentorship, practical advice, and encouragement to people currently navigating financial hardship.

I meet with our coaches monthly. In those conversations, a consistent theme emerges. Many chose debt settlement specifically because bankruptcy is a public record. They expressed concerns about privacy, employment implications, and the long-term stigma that can follow a bankruptcy filing. For them, a safe and regulated debt settlement option offered an opportunity to reduce principal while maintaining dignity and privacy.

They understood that their credit scores would be impacted temporarily. They accepted that trade-off. Importantly, many were able to rebuild their credit and regain stability within a reasonable period of time.

That lived experience matters.

HB 4141 strikes a thoughtful balance. It expands consumer choice while embedding guardrails through licensing, disclosure requirements, and regulatory oversight. It acknowledges that consumers need both protection and access.

For these reasons, Dealing With Debt supports HB 4141. We believe it will provide Oregonians with another safe and equitable path out of debt at a time when families urgently need more options — not fewer.

Finally, I want to make a personal commitment to this Committee. Should HB 4141 become law, our Money\$ense platform stands ready to assist Oregonians in understanding their options and navigating their financial journeys with clarity, education, and community support.

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to Oregon consumers.

Respectfully submitted,

Desmond Stinnie

Chairman, Dealing With Debt