



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 15, 2017

Joint Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee  
Senator Jackie Winters, Co-Chair  
Representative Duane Stark, Co-Chair

Re: HB 5013 - Oregon Judicial Department - Support

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The LWVOR has a position on Oregon State Courts that affirms the separation of powers and the treatment of the Oregon Judicial Department, the third branch of our state government, as a separate, independent, co-equal branch of state government.

In order to maintain a strong court system within the state, the League supports the budget requests for additional judges and staff for circuit courts. Oregon's population has increased, as reflected in the last census and as reflected in increased caseloads in circuit courts in certain counties. The capacities of courts with current staffing levels are strained to handle the cases before them. The League recommends that new judicial positions be funded to address the increased workload. If judges work overtime for too long, they may decide to retire early. It's time to cycle in new judges to keep up with the workload.

The League understands the request to increase judicial salaries to attract new judges and to compensate current judges for their work. However, the priority would be new judicial positions to handle the workload. The increase of salaries over an extended time might be the most feasible in this budget-restricted time.

The courts are a critical piece of our public safety system as offenders are sent to jails, treatment programs, specialized housing, hospitals, or correctional facilities. The court decisions impact the populations of these facilities and utilization of other resources. The budget and staff salaries should reflect the importance of this pivotal role.

The League supports the continued development of family courts and treatment courts to resolve societal problems. Specialty courts can change the directions of citizen lives and break the revolving door cycle of jail and court appearances. This is an effective intervention.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norman Turrill".

Norman Turrill  
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen J. Nibler".

Karen Nibler  
LWVOR Social Policy Coordinator