

SESSION/BILL # _____

ISSUE BRIEF: Oregon County Law Libraries

Background:

The Oregon Legislature authorized the establishment of county law libraries in 1907. County law libraries provide unique legal research services, not available anywhere else to all Oregonians, including litigants who have physical and mental disabilities, homeless and nonprofit organizations. County law libraries also help to level the playing field for lawyers who do not work in large firms with their own libraries. Statewide, the average number of in-person county law library users is between 3,000 and 3,500 a month.

The Oregon Legislature established county law libraries in 1907 and provided for their funding by a portion of the litigant filing fees. Today, all 36 Oregon counties collect these fees to support their law libraries. The Legislature has reduced the percentage of filing fees going to law libraries twice since 1997 from 40% to the current 28%.

Oregon Library Association (OLA) Position:

OLA opposes House Bill 2813 which would cut in half the percentage of filing fee revenue currently devoted to county law libraries. Further reduction would effectively close many small or rural county law libraries and decimate services and collections of all other county law libraries.

More information:

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