

# **Oregon State Courts - Position**

Adopted 1979, 2007

***The League of Women Voters of Oregon affirms:***

- ***The separation of powers provided in Article III, Section 1 of the Oregon Constitution;***
- ***The treatment of the Oregon Judicial Department, the third branch of our state government, as a separate, independent, co-equal branch of state government.***

***The League believes that:***

- ***The State of Oregon should provide access to its courts that meets the diverse needs of all people who use the state courts.***
- ***Judges must be free to decide cases based upon the facts of the particular case and the applicable law, independent of the influence of public opinion and political and partisan pressures.***

***In order to improve the budget process and funding for the Oregon Judicial Department, the League supports:***

- ***Adequate and stable funding to perform the Department's core functions and critical services;***
- ***Funding by the Legislature of mandated programs or procedures for the state courts;***
- ***An independent compensation commission to set judicial compensation of state court judges.***

***The state should ensure that counties are able to provide adequate court facilities, maintenance of those facilities, and security equipment and services.***

***The League believes that the following criteria should be used in evaluating a system of selecting judges in Oregon. The system should:***

- ***Be as free from political influence as possible;***
- ***Encourage and attract the most competent and experienced people;***
- ***Include a method of evaluating judges and judicial candidates.***

***To preserve judicial impartiality and fairness and to protect the public's perception of this impartiality and fairness, the League believes that efforts to obtain campaign finance reform in Oregon should include the financing of judicial campaigns.***

***The League supports alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs (such as arbitration, mediation, and settlement conferences) as a way to resolve disputes in appropriate cases, recognizing that, in some cases, a trial will be necessary. In order to operate effective ADR programs, Oregon's courts should, at a minimum, have:***

- ***Adequate facilities in which to conduct mediation and arbitration processes;***
- ***Availability of trained and qualified arbitrators and mediators;***
- ***Financial assistance for those unable to afford access to ADR;***
- ***Adequate and stable funding.***

***The League encourages the development of specialty courts (such as commercial court) and problem-solving courts (such as drug and mental health courts) within the Oregon Judicial Department. In order to operate effective specialty and problem-solving courts, Oregon's courts need:***

- ***Adequate court staff;***
- ***Facilities in which to hold hearings;***
- ***Availability of service providers and outpatient and residential treatment;***
- ***Adequate and stable funding.***