

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

ANDREW CUTLER
Publisher/Editor

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Owner

ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Editor/Senior Reporter

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2021

Founded October 16, 1875

A4

OUR VIEW

Closing the 'justice gap'

Most tenants in disputes with their landlords in Oregon are not represented by lawyers. The tenants may not be able to afford a lawyer, not realize how much it could help, or a lawyer may not be available.

The Oregon State Bar is taking public comments on a proposal to consider allowing licensed paralegals to provide some legal services in landlord/tenant disputes and also in family law cases. "These are two of the areas of law with the greatest unmet need for legal assistance in Oregon," the state bar says.

The Oregon Supreme Court will make the final decision on whether Oregon law allows this. But the state bar would like public input. There is more information and the place to provide public input is here: www.osbar.org/lp.

The numbers of Oregonians who do not have an attorney in family law or landlord/tenant disputes are high. It's nearly 4 out of 5.

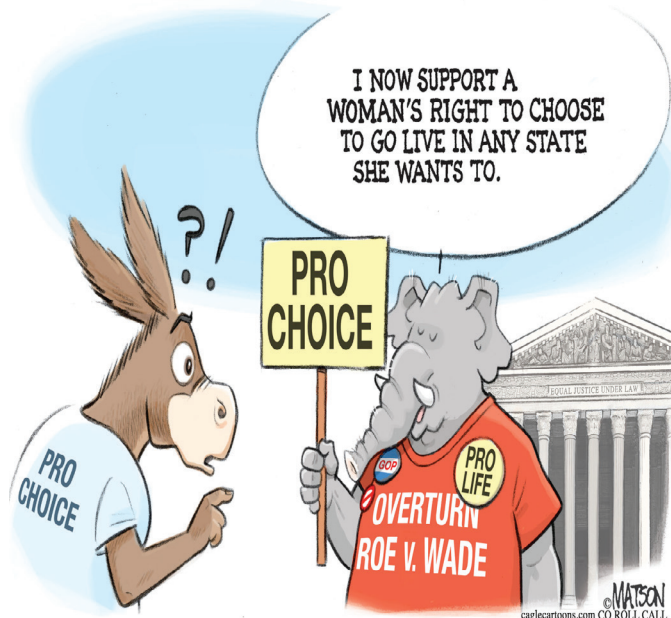
"It's what we refer to as the 'justice gap,' which includes not only the poverty population that legal aid serves (125% of federal poverty guidelines), but also those of modest income who don't qualify for legal aid, but still cannot afford a lawyer," Kateri Walsh, the communications director for the Oregon State Bar, told us in an email.

The bar's program would allow licensing of trained paralegals to do that work. Rules and requirements would be created.

In family law cases, for instance, the paralegals could handle dissolutions of marriage, separations or annulments, custody and parenting times, child and spousal support and a bit more. Would it be a better if there was a lawyer involved? Probably. But allowing paralegals to do that work would provide more access to legal advice to more people and at a price more people could afford.

The analogy the state bar uses is to nurse practitioners in medicine. They can't do everything a doctor can do. They do enable more people to get better care.

What do you think? Should Oregon do it? Once again, the link for more information and to provide your feedback is here, www.osbar.org/lp.



YOUR VIEWS

Winter season brings peace and quiet

The nice thing about winter is that it's very quiet and peaceful. The rush of summer activities are put to rest. The pleasant prospect of enjoying what we worked for is sometimes carried out by a blazing fire in a fireplace or a spot by a window. This solace matches the season of the renewal of life, displayed in nature.

Hot chocolates, teas, roasted meats and the smell of fresh baked goods fill the home with pleasant times and quiet repose. Soft snowflakes fall lazily to the ground, turning the world into a beautiful winter wonderland. Happy sounds of children's laughter and play. It's time for sleds, snowmen, snowballs, skating and of course snow angels; a wonderful time of year.

Sometimes the earth looks dead and barren, cold and foreboding. But the promise of renewed life is in every plant and the animal kingdom as well. When

the time is right, life will burst forth in newness and the trials of winter forgotten.

Bertina Eastman
Baker City

End dirty diesel school buses

Dirty diesel powered school buses carry hundreds of thousands of students to school every day in Oregon. Diesel is a known carcinogen and is known to cause cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses.

For children with growing lungs, diesel exhaust is linked to impaired lung growth. While most students are getting on a diesel powered bus, a number of students started to ride electric school buses when they returned to school in person this fall. These districts have recognized that investments in electric school buses can improve student health, reduce climate

causing emissions and reduce maintenance.

The great news is that on Nov. 17, the Environmental Quality Commission voted to pass the Clean Truck Rules, which will accelerate the supply of zero-emission medium and heavy duty trucks, such as school buses, as well as clean up new trucks. These Clean Truck Rules will help school districts by helping provide more vehicles for districts to purchase and to shift the development and availability of these buses across manufactures.

Electrifying our school buses that take kids to school helps protect young lungs from harmful diesel pollution while reducing carbon pollution. These Clean Truck Rules will help Oregon improve public health for all and help supply the necessary transition for electric school buses that we need for all kids.

Neil Baungard
electric mobility program
manager, Environmental Center

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. PRESIDENT

Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500
Comments: 202-456-1111

U.S. SENATORS

Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244
La Grande office: 541-962-7691

Jeff Merkley
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753
Pendleton office: 541-278-1129

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

Cliff Bentz
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6730
Medford office: 541-776-4646

GOVERNOR

Kate Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court St.
Salem, OR 97301-4047
503-378-4582

REPRESENTATIVES

Bobby Levy, District 58
900 Court St. NE, H-376
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1458
Rep.BobbyLevy@state.or.us

Greg Smith, District 57
900 Court St. NE, H-482
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1457
Rep.GregSmith@state.or.us

SENATOR

Bill Hansell, District 29
900 Court St. NE, S-415
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1729
Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us

EDITORIALS

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

LETTERS

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published.

SEND LETTERS TO:

editor@eastoregonian.com,
or via mail to Andrew Cutler,
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801