

October 2, 2007

Albert Menashe  
President  
Oregon State Bar  
5200 SW Meadows Road  
Lake Oswego, OR 97035

Dear Mr. Menashe and Board of Governors Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of Oregon Women Lawyers (OWLS). Over the past week, a number of our members have expressed concern that recent administrative changes to the OSB Affirmative Action Program (“AAP”) signal a decrease in the Bar’s commitment to the Program. We share those concerns. As such, we write to express our strong support of the Program, and to urge you to ensure its continued ability to provide much-needed services in the Oregon legal community.

We were pleased to see that the Board of Governors responded quickly to questions from the legal community with an open letter to Oregon Minority Lawyers and others, and we have shared that letter with our membership. As an organization, OWLS appreciates the commitment to the AAP that the letter expressed. We very much hope that the “mechanical” changes described therein will strengthen rather than weaken the AAP. In particular, we appreciate the letter’s stated commitment to achieve the following goals:

- New opportunities for contact among minority law students, new lawyers and future bar leaders;
- Adequate operational support for the program to allow program staff to focus on the continued success of the program;
- Continuation and expansion of the OLIO program; and
- Adequate funding and support to ensure the continued success of the program.

OWLS shares these goals for the OSB Affirmative Action Program, and we look forward to ongoing communication from the Board of Governors and Bar staff about how they will be met. To that end, we would greatly appreciate further clarification from you as to how the Bar will achieve these goals under the new structure.

Finally, as the Affirmative Action Program moves forward under the new organizational structure, we look forward to working with the Bar in any way possible to help ensure that the changes to the AAP do in fact result in more—not less—organizational support to a program we and the members of the Bar value highly.

Sincerely,

Kellie Johnson  
President, OWLS Board of Directors