Access to Justice. The Judicial Branch budget has been cut over the last decade, a number of times. In response, the courts have taken numerous steps to improve efficiency. The court system we see now is a leaner, meaner system that existed a decade ago. Further reductions may effect:

- **Quality of Life.** Our communities could be less safe and the business climate may be adversely affected. Without recourses to maintain current service levels, reductions in service are inevitable. Misdemeanors and most civil cases would be lower priority cases handled only as caseload and staffing can manage.

- **Public Safety.** Further reductions may impair the courts’ ability to process lower level criminal cases (misdemeanors such as theft and other property crimes); deny quick access to the justice system for victims, and may ultimately diminish our ability to keep our communities safe.

- **Business.** Keeping the courts open is critical to Oregon’s economic recovery. Businesses need to be able to turn to the courts for a quick resolution of business conflicts. Many small businesses—especially in areas such as real estate and finance—rely on the courts on a daily basis.

- **Vulnerable Citizens.** Further reductions could seriously impact the ability of the public to access the courts in times of crisis. These cases are time and staff intensive, and their speedy resolution is critical to the parties involved.
  - Domestic violence restraining orders,
  - Child abuse and neglect cases,
  - Guardianships and protective proceedings.

Justice Delayed is Justice Denied. In all of these important cases, an inadequately funded court system operated more slowly, depriving all Oregonians of justice under law.

- **Constitutionally / Statutorily mandated.** The court’s workload is essentially all constitutionally or statutorily mandated. That court workload comes through the courthouse doors without regard to the level of staffing of our courts.

- **Criminal Case Priority.** Constitutionally criminal cases must be heard before civil cases, potentially leaving civil, small claims, and landlord/tenant cases to languish.

- **Jury Trials.** Every citizen is entitled to his or her day in court.

Those crafting the 2017 – 2019 state budget face many challenges. From the need for transportation infrastructure investment, to adequate funding for K-12 education, there are funding needs throughout the state. In the face of these challenges, the Oregon State Bar encourages the adoption of the OJD budget which provides adequate funding to keep our courts open 5 days a week.