

# EDITORIAL

*What we do...why we do it.*

*Oregon's Future* encourages Oregonians to learn how government works. As executive director of *Oregon's Future*, one of the most important things I have learned is that, at least in Oregon, one person can make a difference and that small group gathered by that individual can make an even bigger difference. Recently, I had the privilege of attending a strategy session with the citizens committee supporting HB2460, the anti-SLAPP bill Joe Landry discusses in this issue. Since then, when friends talk about the problems with our state's system of government, I am compelled to tell them that the only thing wrong with our system is that they are not participating.

*Oregon's Future* mission requires that I provide a bal-

anced view of issues. The question of SLAPPs, however, challenges my editorial neutrality. As dedicated as I am to supporting opposing views, this issue compels me to take a stand for free speech. Anything that jeopardizes free speech, and therefore threatens public participation in policy decisions, threatens the mission of *Oregon's Future*, its authors, staff members, and readers.

Another thing I have learned in the course of my duties at *Oregon's Future* is that in politics there are more than two sides to almost any issue. Given this, I encourage everyone to learn about SLAPP suits and tell your representatives and senators how you feel. I am also very interested in gathering commentary on the way the

Senate handles HB2460. The potential deadlock on this anti-SLAPP bill in this legislative session makes a compelling story; a story whose essential elements connect it to much larger events in Oregon.

The right to participate in the public process, including a forum like *Oregon's Future*, honestly and without unwarranted fear of reprisal, is a simple issue of fairness. In the most elegant way, this anti-SLAPP legislation embraces fairness to the individual while still assuring fairness to the community. This is the same dual sense of fairness that *Oregon's Future*, through its editorial policy, strives to achieve. It is in this spirit of fairness that I think the legislature should address the issue of SLAPP suits.

Jay Hutchins  
Executive Director, *Oregon's Future*

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