

A testimony of  
Sarah-Andrea A. Morrigan  
in support of the Senate Bill 833  
to the Senate Committee on Business and Transportation  
Thursday, April 11, 2013

Mr. Chairman, and Esteemed Members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Morrigan, and I am the founder and coordinator of the Interfaith Solidarity Cascadia, an ecumenical chaplaincy and human rights advocacy organization originally founded as part of Occupy Portland and continues to maintain close ties to the Occupy and allied movements in Oregon. Two years ago, I spoke also in favor of SB 845, here in this committee, as an activist affiliated with Sisters Of The Road.

As a person of faith and social justice advocate, I stand for Oregon's commitment to upholding human rights, economic justice, public safety, and equal protection [1] of law. As the Occupy movement brought us into awareness, there are marginalized people whose names and faces we may see but previously unaware of their stories. In Portland and other cities, our homeless Oregonians and victims of domestic abuses, on the street and difficult to obtain government-issued identification due to the 2008 policy and associated increase in costs, they are prevented from meeting their fundamental human needs, from getting into a shelter to cashing their checks. Furthermore, they are more likely to be arrested and jailed upon police encounter, for violations that would not otherwise result in detention [2]. This has a far-reaching consequence in their lives, undermining both due process and equal protection, while costing Oregon's taxpayers more money to jail and process them solely because they did not have an ID.

In issuing an executive order in late 2007, then-governor Ted Kulongoski offended me and many other immigrants and people of color by saying that immigrants come to Oregon to get a driver's license for "nefarious purposes," [3] and that he only had an obligation to U.S. citizens who voted for him. Mr. Kulongoski still owes an apology.

Today, SB 833 represents a step towards the right direction, in rectifying the unjust policy in place since 2008. Unlike SB 845 two years ago, this bill is more specific in how the limited-term licenses can and cannot be used as an identification, rather than a broad "not for identification" clause of which I was highly critical. In Maryland, the passage of a similar bill [4] provides for an identification card marked "not for federal purposes" rather than "not for identification," which makes a far better sense if REAL ID Act compliance is the issue. After all, SB 833 and its cousin in Maryland would both require all proofs of identity except the lawful presence part, and the state would retain photographs and other data on file, which can be accessed by state and local law enforcement. It serves our need for public safety far better when our government has the data on people, than not having any on file at all because we won't let some people have an ID. As not everyone is physically or mentally capable of operating motor vehicles, and Oregon being a state that is also committed to alternatives to driving, I also strongly recommend an addition of a limited-term non-driver identification card, which would benefit not only a certain class of immigrants but many Americans who are homeless, escaping from abusers, or newly released from incarceration (three groups of people who

report great difficulties in obtaining or replacing IDs, according to homeless advocates and social workers across the U.S.), who simply need a usable ID to become self-sufficient. [5]

Therefore SB 833 is a bill that ensures public safety and fundamental human rights, and is a moral imperative for you and your colleagues to give it a due consideration and bring it to the floor for passage without delay.

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#### Sources cited

1. <http://www.aclu-or.org/content/equal-protection-expanding-access-driver-licenses-sb-845-2011>
2. National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. Photo identification barriers faced by homeless persons: the impact of Sept. 11. Retrieved from <http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/Photo%20ID%20Barriers1.pdf> (A copy attached to this testimony.)
3. <http://www.katu.com/news/local/11328956.html>
4. <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/blog/bs-md-drivers-license-illegal-immigrant-20130405,0,4609978.story>
5. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christine-schanes/how-homeless-people-feel-b\\_835216.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christine-schanes/how-homeless-people-feel-b_835216.html)

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