



Marandas  
Sinlapasai

From the desk of:  
Rep. Gallegos

**PLEASE VOTE YES ON HB 4128 RELATING TO NOTARIO FRAUD**

Dear Members of the Oregon House of Representatives:

I write you to please **support HB 4128**. In 2015, a bill was passed to create a 12-member Task Force on Immigration Consultant Fraud. I had an opportunity to participate in the Task Force as a licensed attorney in Oregon who practices in the area of immigration law. I have been practicing law in this state since 1997, I am a past chair of the Oregon Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), and I currently serve as our chapter's liaison with the local office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The term "notario publico" is particularly problematic in that it creates a unique opportunity for deception. The literal translation of "notario publico" is "notary public." While a notary public in the United States is authorized only to witness the signature of forms, a notary public in many Latin American (and European) countries refers to an individual who has received the equivalent of a law license and who is authorized to represent others before the government.

Individuals who represent themselves as qualified to offer legal advice or services concerning immigration or other matters of law, who have no such qualification, routinely victimize members of immigration communities in Oregon. Misrepresentations as to an individual's qualification to offer legal advice can have severe implications for immigrants. In many cases the work performed by such individuals results in missed deadlines, the filing of incorrect or incomplete forms, or the filing of false claims with the government. As a result of the advice or actions of such individuals an immigrant can miss opportunities to obtain legal residency, can be unnecessarily deported, or can be subject to civil and/or criminal liability for the filing of false claims.

In addition, immigrants often spend thousands, or tens of thousands of dollars in payment for what they believe are the legitimate services of a licensed attorney. In egregious cases, notarios use threats of violence or other wrongful conduct to keep members of the public from reporting the notario to law enforcement. HB 4128 will give law enforcement tools to investigate, charge, and prosecute egregious cases under the crimes of extortion and/or obstruction of governmental or judicial administration. The bill will also encourage victims of notario fraud to cooperate with law enforcement. I ask that you please vote yes for HB 4128.

Sincerely,

John J. Marandas  
Attorney at Law