



June 7, 2017

The Honorable Jennifer Williamson
Chair, House Rules Committee

VIA E-Mail

Re: HB 3464

Chair Williamson and Members of the Committee:

As Mayor of the City of Woodburn, I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for HB 3464.

Woodburn is the largest minority-majority city in the State of Oregon. The largest single minority group is Latinos. While most of Woodburn's Latino population consists of American citizens and legal residents, a smaller but still significant group are not documented or the beneficiaries of more limited residency status, such as DACA. It is important to note that both local agencies and academic researchers have found that most undocumented people in Woodburn are the family and household members of others who are citizens or legal residents.

Woodburn provides its services to residents and/or ratepayers without reference to their immigration status. Undocumented residents pay property taxes directly or through their mortgage or rent payment. They pay for sewer and water services. They may pay to have their children participate in sports or recreational activities we offer, or to participate in adult league play. We believe that in return they deserve the same quality service as any other community member.

Our Police Chief, Jim Ferraris, has been a leader in reassuring community members that they are safe when they report crimes, provide tips, or otherwise cooperate with police. He has made it clear that, for purposes of law enforcement and community policing, we do not care about a community member's immigration status. Fortunately, this approach is not just the Woodburn Police Department's internal policy, it is supported by Oregon statute. Unfortunately, policing is only one function a local government provides. We also function as a utility company, a library operator, and a recreation provider, among other things. HB3464 offers statutory support for our practices that we do not find under existing Oregon law.

Office of the Mayor

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I've attached a letter that I sent to Attorney General Rosenblum in March. In that, we expressed our concern about the level of fear affecting community members because of increased ICE activity and the level of rhetoric coming from the new administration in Washington, D.C. We also expressed an interest in having the Attorney General provide some direction to us and other local governments as to our rights and obligations while serving our community members who are not documented and their family and household members.

A number of the concerns that prompted my letter were the following:

1. As stated above, we provide services without reference to immigration status. Some services are fee-for-service, and others are available to all individuals with an address within the Woodburn city limits. To do otherwise, we believe, is both unfair and potentially discriminatory. Are we on solid ground in having such a policy?
2. We collect various types of information about community members as we work with them as a local government. People sign up for water service, a library card, or a park program. They may pay a traffic or ordinance fine, or make arrangements to pay a fine in installments. If ICE or a similar agency were to ask us for this information, we believe we face substantial potential liability whether we share such information or whether we refuse.
3. We are concerned about people who are afraid to use our facilities or services, or allow family members to do so, because of concerns about ICE enforcement activities. We want to encourage the fullest community participation possible, but do not want to put individuals and families in harm's way. We need some direction on how to do this consistently with state and federal law.

I am pleased to see that HB 3464 addresses all of the concerns set forth above. Unfortunately, federal enforcement priorities that conflict with Oregon communities' values will continue for some time, but this legislation will offer valuable assistance to local governments as we tend to some of our most vulnerable community members.

We thank Governor Brown and Attorney General Rosenblum for their wisdom and compassion in asking that this legislation be introduced. We thank Representatives Alonso Leon and Hernandez for introducing it. We thank the co-sponsors. We believe HB 3464 deserves the Committee's favorable consideration.

Sincerely,


Kathy Figley
Mayor, City of Woodburn



March 22, 2017

The Honorable Ellen F. Rosenblum, Attorney General
Oregon Department of Justice
1162 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301-4096

Sent via Email and U.S. Postal Service

Dear Attorney General Rosenblum,

Woodburn is one of Oregon's most diverse and growing communities, comprised of significant Latino, Russian, Somali and senior populations. We are a community deeply committed to the notion of family, faith and hard work. As a result, Woodburn provides a quality of life and cultural richness that few in the Northwest enjoy. We are proud of Woodburn's diversity and strong leadership.

Recently, we have seen media reports suggesting federal immigration agents are actively targeting the greater Woodburn area simply because of our Latino community. These reports have caused significant alarm and fear.

Regardless of their immigration status, many in Woodburn are fearful they will be stopped, questioned and even taken from their homes simply based on the color of their skin, lack of language skills, or because of family relationships. Many of these people are first, second and even third generation American citizens with children in our schools.

I have concluded that we need your help in explaining what rights exist for Oregon residents. Specifically, I am asking you to provide guidelines advising Oregonians of their legal rights when interacting with federal immigration agents – or any law enforcement officer – should they face questioning about their citizenship or immigration status. It is my hope the City can then relay this information to our community, helping ease fears and better empower our residents.

Office of the Mayor

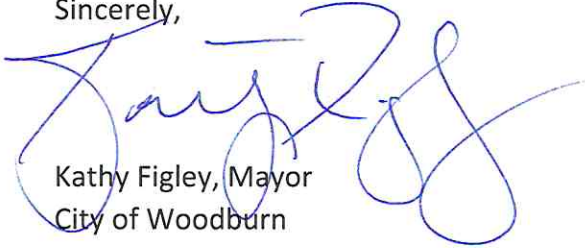
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In Woodburn, the American Dream is alive and well with families, entrepreneurs and young people from all over the world. They have moved to Woodburn seeking freedom, education, opportunity and the ability to participate in civic life.

I appreciate your assistance and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Kathy Figley, Mayor
City of Woodburn

cc: Senator Peter Courtney
Representative Teresa Alonso Leon
Woodburn City Council