

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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To: Joint Committee on Transportation
From: Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Re: Support HB 2015

April 17, 2019

Co-Chairs McKeown and Beyer, and Members of the Committee,

The board of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon urges your support for HB 2015, because no one should have to live in fear of being deported or worry about their families being torn apart simply because they are taking their kids to school or the doctor's office, going to work or going to their place of worship.

HB 2015 allows all Oregon residents who pass written and driving tests, pay the fees, and provide proof of identity and residency to receive a standard driver license, regardless of citizenship status. The bill provides protection to ensure a person's information is secured and not shared with the federal government. And it includes anti-discrimination language to ensure a person isn't targeted for having a standard license.

EMO - a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners - is driven to protect family and community well-being, and to recognize and celebrate the dignity of each and every one of our neighbors. It is with tremendous pride and conviction that we stand in solidarity with our immigrant clients, colleagues and fellow congregants as indispensable members of our congregations and communities.

Today, immigrant families who are an integral part of Oregon's cultural and economic fabric are living in fear and anxiety. For our immigrant neighbors, friends, and family members, fear has seeped through every aspect of their lives. Many are scared to take their children to school, go to a doctor's appointment, or even open their door at home. Nobody should live with this kind of fear. Your vote to support HB 2015 upholds our values of dignity and respect for all people who call Oregon home.

EMO also supports HB 2015 because we stand with those who have been granted Temporary Protect Status or relief under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Without HB 2015, if the federal administration is successful in curtailing or ending these programs, TPS-holders and DREAMers will live in fear of deportation.

And EMO stands with asylum-seekers who have fled religious persecution, human rights atrocities and war, and who lack the documentation needed to obtain a driver's license.

Finally, as an organization that directly serves 17,000 individuals a year, it is important for us to discuss that this bill will benefit multiple communities impacted by REAL ID requirements who have difficulty accessing their birth certificate and other paperwork necessary to prove their citizenship status – including those who are homeless or who have survived acts of domestic violence. EMO's Second Home program provides housing for high school students experiencing homelessness. EMO's HIV Day Center serves houseless individuals who have been diagnosed with HIV or AIDS. And at EMO's ROSS program, we offer services that help survivors of

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domestic violence and sexual assault to rebuild their lives and achieve financial independence. We know from this work that it can be difficult for some of the most vulnerable members of our community to access the documents they need to prove their citizenship status.

On behalf of our clients and all of our neighbors, we urge your support for HB 2015.

Sincerely,
Britt Conroy
Public Policy Director, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon