

Rev. Caroline Zaworski
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Corvallis
4515 SW West Hills Blvd
Corvallis, Oregon 97333

22 March 2021

Dear Chair Bynum and members of the Committee,

I write to you today to urge you to pass HB 3265, The Sanctuary Promise Act. This piece of legislation will get us closer to a horizon in which all Oregonians feel their families are safe, secure and protected. As a person whose faith is rooted in the Progressive Protestant tradition, I hold deeply in my heart that all people deserve to be treated with care and provided with safety. This piece of legislation does that by expanding our decades-old Sanctuary law so that more people in my community feel safe from unfair harassment and profiling going to work, going to get groceries, or driving to their places of worship.

I care about this bill because I have friends who have been here since they were young children; they now have their own children and they run a thriving business which employs many people. They serve our community in their schools and churches, in other community organizations, they contribute to the economy, and they deserve to feel safe and secure in their community. As both a minister and a Nurse Practitioner, I am aware of the effects of fear and anxiety on the health of community members with varying immigrant status. No one should feel afraid in their own community. Children need to feel that they can trust the police to protect them, rather than hide from police out of fear.

This bill strengthens our existing Sanctuary law, which has been in effect for over 30 years. This is not a new issue, however it provides accountability for those in law enforcement. Without accountability there is often loss of trust; once trust is lost it is very hard to regain and for those of us who are engaged with our wider community when we see trust broken at any level we lose trust as well.

As a leader in the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (IMIJ), I am part of a network of people of faith and fierce love who have accompanied community members as they've navigated an immigration system that separates families and tears communities apart. While it can often be hard to see as we navigate language in a bill, this law is really about people and communities together ensuring that all Oregonians feel safer. I urge you to pass HB 3265.

Thank you for your work and attention,

Caroline Zaworski