

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Noble and Power, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is the Rev. Morgan Schmidt and I live in Bend, OR. I am one of the clergy persons in an infamous photo from the day the ICE busses came to Bend and we stood face to face with federal agents.

I stood alongside fellow clergy and hundreds of concerned community members as we placed our peaceful bodies between federal agents and two men who were kidnapped by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Bend, OR in August 2020. I spent the day guiding peaceful protesters in holding the busses (so that attorneys could file an injunction for their release), watched as our local police collaborated with ICE personnel, comforted people who were injured and gassed by federal agents, and ultimately grieved alongside my neighbors as our efforts failed and the men were taken to the detention center in Tacoma, WA.

There was no sanctuary in Oregon that day. There is no sanctuary in Oregon on so many days, for so many people who are beloved members of our community and lack legal status. Our 34-year-old sanctuary law has significant gaps that cause people to live in fear and injustice rather than safety. We are all Oregonians, and they deserve our protection, support, and justice.

I am writing in support of HB 3265, which I hope will close some of these gaps and restore the rights and dignity of undocumented Oregonians who have experienced harm at the hands of our broken federal immigration system. We need to act now so that we can truly offer sanctuary to all Oregonians.

The Sanctuary Promise Act accomplishes the following:

- Builds trust in Oregon communities by clearly prohibiting local law enforcement and governments from working with and communicating with federal agents for the purpose of immigration enforcement.
 - I saw firsthand how this gap negatively affected our community, when the Bend Police Department allowed an ICE agent to charge his phone in one of their patrol vehicles, since his truck was blocked in by peaceful protesters. We lost our ability to negotiate for a wellness check for the kidnapped men - we offered to release his truck in exchange for having an immigration attorney bring them food and water - because he no longer needed to access the phone charger in his truck. It is very likely this same phone is what allowed him to call for federal agents to come, attack peaceful protesters, and take our neighbors away to Tacoma.
 - It is also well known that the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office provides information to federal immigration authorities about the suspected country of origin of people who have been arrested, as well as their suspected immigration status. The Sanctuary Promise Act would put an end to this sort of collusion, or at

very least make it possible for community members to hold such state and local institutions that collaborate legally accountable for the harm they participate in.

- Allows community members to seek accountability when the law is violated.
- Prohibits state and local correctional facilities from contracting with the federal government for immigration detention.
- Prohibits private entities like for-profit corporations from operating private prisons for immigrant detention.
- Protects Oregon's justice system by enshrining into law the current state court rule that prohibits warrantless civil arrests in and around courthouses.

Because of the current gaps in our "sanctuary" state laws, I know community members who hesitate to report crime, seek social services, etc. due to fear of drawing ICE's attention to themselves, their family members, and their community. I do not want my neighbors to live in fear.

We have been unable to hold the Bend Police Department or the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office accountable for the many ways we suspect they participate with ICE.

Bend is forever changed because of the events of last August. ICE actions, which too often happen covertly and without the knowledge of the community at large, were brought into the light. We care about our immigrant neighbors and are absolutely sick at the thought that so many must live in fear as they go to work, walk to the corner store, and participate in the fabric of our social life together.

These are my neighbors. These are my friends. We are all Oregonians regardless of where we were born or how we came to live here. Immigrants in Oregon have a right to feel safe, to participate fully in our cities, workplaces, and faith communities. They deserve, as a matter of basic human dignity, to be safe from unfair harassment and profiling, just as I am.

I dream of an Oregon that is a true Sanctuary, and offer my wholehearted support for HB 3265. Please do everything in your power to make our sanctuary law stronger so that we can protect Oregon families and show our support for the safety and dignity of all Oregonians.

Thank you.

Rev. Morgan Schmidt
Bend, OR