

To: House Judiciary Committee  
From: Alicia Temple, Oregon Law Center  
Date: March 25, 2021  
Re: HB 3265 Sanctuary Promise Act

Chair Bynum and members of the committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), I respectfully request your support for HB 3265, the Sanctuary Promise Act. Immigrant Oregonians are Oregonians and should not be targeted for immigrant enforcement purposes using state resources solely because of where they were born.

OLC is a non-profit organization that provides free legal help to people struggling to make ends meet. Our mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. We advocate for our clients and for the services and programs that help them to overcome poverty. Across the state we often see how the issues that affect low-income Oregonians generally - affordable housing, stable income, access to health care - are exacerbated for immigrant Oregonians who often are unable to access many services due to language, transportation, or immigration status.

Many Oregonians are immigrants or live in mixed-status households and, as Oregonians, pay taxes, attend school and church, shop, work, and contribute to Oregon's quality of life. Immigrant Oregonians are some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. Many are people of color who perform important yet low-paying, dangerous work that supports Oregon's economy.

Immigrant Oregonians should be encouraged to access services and engage in their communities. Certain practices or lack of protections by state and local agencies discourage immigrant families from accessing public services because of possible negative immigration consequences, including deportation. For example,

- local jails and the DOC often share place of birth and release information with federal immigration authorities even though that information has nothing to do with the person's state case;
- immigrant parents avoid applying for important benefits for which their children are eligible because they may be asked about their immigration status and worried that that information will somehow be passed along to federal immigration authorities;
- civil litigants and witnesses who are immigrants avoid state courthouses because they are worried about federal immigration authorities using the courthouse as a place to enforce federal immigration law.

HB 3265 seeks to separate state and local agencies from federal immigration enforcement. Specifically, it will:

- clarify that all state law enforcement agencies, including local jails and the DOC, are prohibited from using its resources to enforce immigration laws at any point in the immigration proceedings;
- create a way for people who are subjected to unlawful practices under this law to use the courts to prevent continued violations;
- provide some protection to people who access state courthouse regardless of immigration status;
- reduces the risk that information about citizenship or immigration status will be provided to federal immigration authorities.

These changes will make state and local agencies more welcoming, accessible, and responsive to the needs of all community members, regardless of place of birth. Oregon's sanctuary state law was overwhelmingly supported at the ballot in 2018, and now the legislature has the opportunity to strengthen the law to ensure the protections live up to the promise we've made to Oregonians. We urge your support for HB 3265.