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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 Mennonite tradition, I hold deeply in my heart the importance of community, loving our neighbors, and living radical hospitality. As the Mennonite Central Committee Immigration Policy Principles state, "The Biblical tradition is one that instructs its followers to welcome strangers - as we welcome the stranger, we welcome Jesus himself." The Bible is full of stories of migration and Hebrew Torah has more laws on the treatment of immigrants than any other issue, all of them variations on the following "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident sojourner, for you were once sojourners in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 22:21) Jesus himself was a refugee as a child (Matt. 2), and taught his disciples to welcome foreigners and to provide for anyone who was hungry, thirsty, or in need of clothing. Furthermore, as a member of the Oregon Fellowship of Reconciliation and Fellowship of Reconciliation USA, National Council, I believe in working for local, national, and world communities will full dignity for all beings.

This piece of legislature aligns with values of hospitality and community care by expanding our decades-old Sanctuary law so that more people in my community feel safe from unfair harassment and profiling going to work, taking their children to school, going to get groceries, or driving to their places of worship.

I care about this bill because immigrant Oregonians have been my co-workers, close friends, fellow church members, and participants in the community center hosted at my church and have made incredible contributions to my life, to my church, and to the wellbeing of communities statewide. I believe each and every one is a beloved child of God. The last several years, it has been heartbreaking to witness the rise in fear among immigrant families and community members as ICE presence increased in our communities and to need to support families with resources that help them create plans in case their families were to be separated by ICE. During times when fear was highest, I saw a decrease in participation in our community center, and even a decrease in immigrant community members going to the grocery store (and this long before the pandemic). I remember one young undocumented immigrant leader stating just after the election of Donald Trump (knowing the likely impacts for immigrants), "home just told me that it doesn't want me." I believe that this bill will communicate to immigrant Oregonians in word and action, this is your community, this is your home.

As a leader in the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (IMrJ), 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,

Bethany Renata Loberg