



# FAMILY FORWARD OREGON

*Smart policies for today's families.*

Testimony in Support of HB 3230  
March 30, 2021

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

Family Forward Oregon strongly supports HB 3230 which would ensure that Oregon's immigrants have access to legal representation during deportation proceedings. Our organization works to strengthen the economic security of mothers, caregivers, parents, and families of all backgrounds through bold policies. As members of the Fair Shot Coalition, we support this legislation as part of our ongoing effort for racial and immigrant justice.

Despite a new president and administration, Oregon's immigrants still remain very vulnerable to detention and deportation. ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) has dehumanized, abused, and criminalized people of color— particularly Latinx, Muslim, and Southeast Asian immigrant women, for decades, and continue to do so. The number of women detained and the proportion of women in detention in the U.S have also continued to rise. Women and girls made up 14.5 percent of the population detained by ICE in 2016, a 60 percent increase from 2009.<sup>1</sup> Immigrant women, mothers and caregivers in Oregon are the backbone of our families, communities, workplaces and places of worship, and should be kept safe in their communities.

That is why we urgently need accessible, culturally responsive, and community focused legal services, to ensure that immigrants have access to valid legal claims to remain in the country, safely. Universal representation safeguards due process by allowing immigrant Oregonians to access the rights afforded to them under existing law.

Universal Legal Representation expands the successful Equity Corps pilot program funded by Multnomah County, the City of Portland, and the State of Oregon to create statewide infrastructure for immigration legal defense. The program will also prepare Oregon for any major changes in national immigration policy by creating community-led pathways to citizenship.

HB 3230 would accomplish the following:

- Create a statewide call center that would provide direct contacts and streamline access for those seeking help.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2019/10/21/475997/immigration-detention-dangerous-womens-health-rights/>

- Community based organizations that already have deep connections to the community would oversee the program's policy and fiscal decisions and have an active role in coordinating.
- The statewide representation team would embed lawyers, through fellowships, at CBOs to ensure community members could turn to the organizations they already know and trust in times of need. Impacted communities would be able to choose their provider.

According to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, one in every 10 Oregon children live with a family member without legal status. Representation by an attorney is the single most outcome determinative factor in deportation proceedings, and improves someone's chances of staying with their family by 457 percent.

Oregon can be a national leader in ensuring immigrants in our state know they are supported and will receive help during a difficult and traumatic process. We must protect immigrant women, mothers, and children and support their ability to thrive. By doing so, we can continue being a place that values community and families staying together. We urge your YES vote on HB 3230.

Sincerely,

Lisa Kwon, Policy Manager  
Family Forward Oregon