



**Testimony of Leland Baxter-Neal, Director of Advocacy  
Regarding HB 3230 Universal Representation  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
March 30, 2021**

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Power and Noble, and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Leland Baxter-Neal and I am the Director of Advocacy at Latino Network. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in emphatic support of HB 3230, Universal Representation.

Latino Network is a culturally-specific nonprofit serving Latinx youth and families in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Our organization provides transformative services to more than 8,000 Latinx youth, families, and community members in multiple areas including education, family stability, housing support, and advocacy.

Latino Network is also one of the founding members of the Oregon Worker Relief Fund (OWRF), a statewide program designed and driven by community-based organizations to provide economic relief to Oregonians excluded from state and federal pandemic relief programs. OWRF has scaled an initial investment of \$300,000 to more than \$100 million, with every public dollar being provided directly to impacted Oregonians.

The concept of HB 3230 (Universal Representation) is one that recognizes Oregonians as Oregonians, regardless of where they are born. Immigrants in this state make our communities, our schools, and our places of business stronger. But education, family and work can be easily interrupted for immigrant Oregonians.

When a person is faced with deportation, unlike in criminal court, they are not guaranteed legal representation. Under our immigration system, many immigrants, including legal permanent residents and others with lawful status, routinely face immigration proceedings that can result in deportation and a lifetime banishment from the United States. The government is always represented in these proceedings by trained immigration attorneys arguing for deportation. Immigrants, however, may face these proceedings with nothing more than a telephone interpreter.

The fear of facing deportation proceedings without support can prevent community members from seeking services, medical care or shelter during a wildfire. It disrupts productivity, family cohesion, and community safety. Deportations fracture families and communities, with devastating and long-lasting impacts on the individuals involved, their communities, and overall public safety and wellbeing in this state.

Providing attorneys to people facing deportation proceedings embraces and strengthens the rule of law. It means that immigration cases will be decided based on all of the facts and with the benefit of legal advocacy on both sides. Outcomes will be based on rule of law and not an imbalance of power.

In the system being proposed by HB 3230, no Oregonian will be left without legal counsel in facing removal proceedings simply because they cannot afford counsel. The following principles have guided the development of this policy:

- **Universal:** Everyone means everyone. Legal services should not be denied to an immigrant Oregonian simply because they cannot afford them;
- **Prioritized:** Those at imminent risk of deportation and Oregonians who are detained should receive services first;
- **Accountable:** The system is accountable to both the impacted community and the legislature through rigorous reporting;
- **Integrated:** There is collaboration between all parts of the system;
- **Community centered:** Those most proximate to the harm are the most likely to know the solution; the system centers the impacted individuals and communities in implementing and managing services.

This proposal has earned the support of the Racial Justice Council, is included in the Governor's Recommended Budget, is listed among the BIPOC caucus's top priorities, is on the Fair Shot for All Coalition Agenda, and is supported by over 30 community-based organizations.

We ask you to please support this important bill.

Sincerely,

Leland Baxter-Neal,  
Director of Advocacy, Latino Network