

TO: House Committee on Judiciary  
FROM: Matt Newell-Ching, Public Policy Manager  
RE: Support for HB 3230  
DATE: March 30, 2021



Chair Bynum and members of the committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is to end hunger and its root causes. We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today, and we build community power to dismantle systems and policies that drive hunger and poverty.

All Oregonians should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of where they were born. The feeling of dignity and respect is foundational for a family's ability to put food on the table, keep a roof over their heads, and thrive. But Oregonians who are immigrants and refugees, especially those who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color, have faced increased immigration enforcement that includes racial profiling, detention, family separation, and potential removal to countries where they have fled violence and persecution.

Oregonians who are immigrants work in key industries, are essential workers, and own small businesses that contribute to the vibrancy of our communities. But despite the many social, cultural and economic contributions of this community, immigration policy decisions have wrongfully targeted immigrant families and heightened a climate of fear over the last couple of years. The cumulative impact of these policies has created a chilling effect that impacts their ability to put food on the table. Many community members have reported not feeling safe accessing food assistance programs like SNAP, school meals, and even food pantries because of fear. No one should have to choose between eating and keeping your family together.

**Oregon Food Bank urges the legislature to pass HB 3230 to ensure all Oregonians have access to legal counsel to help keep families together.** In the strict sense, the bill connects more Oregonians with legal representation by establishing statewide call centers and strengthening the legal support network through trusted community-based organizations. This is critical because Representation by an attorney improves someone's chances of staying with their family by over 400%. But the impact has the potential to be much bigger than this. Combined with proposed changes at the federal level, strengthening our sanctuary law is an important step in re-establishing trust in our communities that is critical for every family to feel safe and thrive.

We have the opportunity to rebuild and emerge stronger. 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. This is our moment to embrace our shared values, care for each other and take bold action in support of *all* Oregonians.

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