

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

My name is Emily Wanous and I am the legislative director for the Oregon Student Association (OSA). I am writing in support of HB 3230, Universal Legal Representation, which would provide immigrant Oregonians with legal support during deportation proceedings. Protection of all Oregonians is vital, especially when many folks in removal proceedings have valid claims to remain in the United States and have a desire to continue contributing to their community and the State, as a whole.

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. In addition, the program will also prepare Oregon for any major changes in national immigration policy by creating community-led pathways to citizenship.

Many folks in the deportation process struggle to understand the claims on their own, which is why HB3230 is so important. This bill would allow for Oregon immigrants to have culturally responsive and community-specific legal services to assist them through this process.

Oregon is home to thousands of immigrants and refugees who live in both cities and towns statewide, who are students, workers, mothers, sons and more. According to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, one in every 10 Oregon children live with a family member without legal status. Immigrants are a vital piece to the culture and economic vitality of our State. At a time when our communities are being impacted by a global pandemic, now is the time to ensure all Oregonians have access to services like legal defense.

All Oregonians deserve to be treated with compassion and dignity. The State of Oregon has a responsibility to protect those who call Oregon home.

Thank you for your time and I urge your "yes" vote on HB3230.