

Yes on HB 3230: Universal Legal Representation

Testimony from Alan

March 30, 2021

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

For the record, my name is Alan Gonzalez, I'm a resident of Marion County.

I am testifying today to pressure the goal of many Oregonians. Your support of HB 3230, HB 3230 will give the right to undocumented residents in Oregon to seek a legal representative while being detained in a center or with deportation orders. The process of deportation can be traumatic and can create anxiety not just to the individual but to the family as well. But if we can ensure community members who are facing deportation an access to a legal representative we can perhaps discard those awful feelings.

When I was younger, my uncle drove my cousins and I to soccer practice, on his way back he got stopped by a police officer. And after not showing some identification, he got arrested and was taken to prison. While he was detained he said that he felt pressured to sign documents that he had no knowledge about. Immediately after, they mentioned that he was going to be transferred to an ICE facility to get deported.

I was too young to comprehend the wrongfulness of that matter. But not young enough to know the severe anxiety my family was facing. My uncle was not a bad driver and was a victim of racial profiling. No one should be targeted based on the color of their skin, their accent, or their perceived immigration status. And even if he did commit a traffic offense. He shouldn't have been deported. Instead of making him sign unaware documents he should have been provided legal representation.

I am still aware that similar situations have been reoccurring in Oregon. But HB 3230 will expand the availability of legal support and representation for immigrants in Oregon. Furthermore being able to choose the right legal representation can make a big difference in a person's case. Someone without legal representation is up to five times more likely to be deported regardless of the merit of their case.

I am encouraging the members of this committee and your colleagues in the legislature to please support HB 3230 to ensure there is not another unjust deportation.

Thank you.