



SUBJECT: Yes, on HB 3230

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

Adelante Mujeres strongly supports HB 3230, Universal Legal Representation, which would provide immigrant Oregonians legal support during a difficult and traumatic process. Despite a new president and administration, Oregon's immigrant community continues to rely in limbo and be vulnerable to deportation. Rather than furthering the hardships experienced, HB 2320 would be a pathway for a more accessible, culturally-responsive, and community-focused legal services.

Adelante Mujeres, "Women Rise Up," is a non-profit organization in the city of Forest Grove. The agency has a rich history of successfully engaging the low-income Latinx and immigrant community by acting as a forum for community advocacy. Adelante Mujeres' mission is to provide holistic education and empowerment opportunities to low-income Latina women and their families to ensure full participation and active leadership in the community. We served over 10,000 individuals in 2020 with comprehensive, life-changing services. We serve families through Educational, Microenterprise and Leadership programing.

According to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, one in every 10 Oregon children live with a family member without legal status. This highlights the reason why the majority of our program participants live under constant stress due to immigration policies that lead to family separation. In addition, through a series of listening sessions we hosted in 2019-2020, we identified that local ICE activities and deportations were the number one fear for the community. If a family faces deportation they need to be reassured that they will not be alone, that they will receive adequate resources, and legal services that would help them navigate the already complex and difficult process and would allow them to fight for their case.

Over the past few years we have provided case management to 15 individuals seeking asylum and 9 deportation cases. Every person has expressed how important and urgent it is to access culturally specific, affordable, and local legal representation. We know that the right legal representation can make a big difference in a person's case! A community member without legal representation is 5.5 times more likely to be deported regardless of the merit of their case.

We know individuals who have been deported due to not having financial resources to afford adequate legal representation. This situation needs to change, and HB 2030 is the solution. This proposal would create a statewide call center that would provide direct legal contacts and streamline access for those seeking help. In addition, people would be given the power to choose their legal representative at a trusted local organization.

Another reason why we support this proposal is because Adelante Mujeres is a navigating agency for the Oregon Worker Relief Fund. Most people that we have navigated are local



community members in Washington County, that already trust and have a connection with the organization. We can build a similar system that allows our communities of colors to connect with the agencies they already know and trust to help them during this difficult time.

We must protect the rights of everyone who calls Oregon home and support their ability to thrive. By doing so, we can continue being a place that values families and communities. We strongly encourage you to support HB 3230 because immigrants and refugees are essential workers, business owners, and contribute to the state's cultural and economic vitality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Bridget Cooke'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bridget Cooke, Executive Director, Adelante Mujeres  
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