

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

My name is Brayan Mendoza. I'm an immigrant to the United States and a resident of Portland.

I'm here today to ask you to please support HB 3230 to expand legal support and representation for immigrants in Oregon.

Before coming to the United States, I lived in Guadalajara, Mexico. But because my family owned land there, a drug cartel murdered multiple members of my immediate family. I knew I needed to leave in order to survive.

In 2018, I arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border to request asylum. I was taken to the federal prison in Sheridan, Oregon. I was held there with 120 other asylum seekers. It was extremely crowded and scary there. We were confined to our cells for 23 hours per day.

Fortunately, we had access to legal counsel through the Sheridan Pro Bono Project, a universal representation program. I'm happy and grateful that so many organizations and people came together to fight for those of us who were detained here in Oregon.

Because of the legal help I received, I was able to win asylum. I am so proud to be an Oregonian now, and to have the chance to live a life that is free of violence. In the fall, I am starting a program at Portland State University, and I plan to continue my studies and build my life here.

I ask that the members of this committee and your colleagues please support HB 3230 so that Oregon ensures that other immigrants in our community can access justice like I did.

Thank you.