



May 6, 2021

House Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee on Civil Law  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 572 –Vulnerable Youth Guardianship

Chair Power and Members of the Committee,

Innovation Law Lab<sup>1</sup> supports Senate Bill 572<sup>2</sup>, which would create a pathway for vulnerable youth between the ages of 18 and 21 to petition an Oregon court to appoint a trusted adult as a guardian.

Vulnerable youth are immigrant Oregonians who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent and who face danger or harm in their home countries such that it is not in their best interest to return. These youth are vulnerable to trafficking, exploitation, homelessness, and further abuse, neglect or abandonment, and allowing them to petition an Oregon court to appoint a guardian will provide them with stability and protect them from future harm.

The youth SB 572 would protect are particularly vulnerable- not only have they suffered past trauma, but their immigration status puts them at further risk of harm in the United States. Moreover, in addition to having to navigate the complexities of the U.S. immigration system, these youth are adjusting to a new culture, language, and education system. Providing these youth with an avenue through which they can petition for a guardian will provide them with protection and will also promote stability for their long-term wellbeing.

Innovation Law Lab works with many vulnerable youth who would benefit from SB 572 through Oregon's universal representation program, Equity Corps of Oregon. These are youth who have experienced harm that continues to impact their day-to-day lives and who have been forced to

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<sup>1</sup> Innovation Law Lab is a nonprofit organization dedicated to upholding the rights of immigrants and refugees. Founded in 2014 in response to the mass detention and deportation of asylum-seeking immigrant families, Innovation Law Lab specializes in the creation of scalable, highly replicable, and connected sites of resistance that create paradigm shifts in immigration representation, litigation, and advocacy.

<sup>2</sup> <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB572/Introduced>

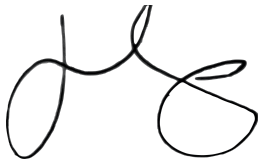
proceed with their immigration cases without the support of a trusted legal guardian. They deserve to be protected and provided with the support they need to succeed and flourish.

For these reasons, we urge the legislature to support SB 572, and join other states such as California, Washington, Colorado, and New York in providing protection and support to vulnerable immigrant youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Manning". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping tail.

Stephen Manning  
Executive Director  
Innovation Law Lab

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jordan Cunnings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

Jordan Cunnings  
Director of Equity Corps of Oregon  
Innovation Law Lab