

SB 1543 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

**Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110
Implementation**

Action Date: 02/10/22

Action: Do pass and refer to Ways and Means by prior reference.

Vote: 4-2-1-0

Yeas: 4 - Dembrow, Gelser Blouin, Manning Jr, Prozanski

Nays: 2 - Heard, Linthicum

Exc: 1 - Thatcher

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/9, 2/10

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes the Universal Representation Fund in the State Treasury to provide a statewide, integrated, universal navigation and representation system for immigration matters. Requires an established Oregon nonprofit to serve as the fiscal agent to award grants to organizations to provide services related to immigration matters through a universal representation program, at no cost to the client. Describes the types of services the funds are allocated for, including attorneys from community-based organizations, immigration-matter filing fees, costs, and a statewide universal navigation and support system. Requires individuals receiving services through the program to be financially eligible. Directs the Chief Justice of the Oregon Supreme Court to transfer funds to the Oregon State Bar's Legal Services Program. Directs fiscal agent to create an advisory committee for the program, and to conduct performance and financial audits. Requires fiscal agent to report by August 31 of each year to the interim committee of the Legislative Assembly related to legal services, the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and the Legislative Fiscal Officer. Specifies content of report. Appropriates \$10.5 million from the General Fund to DAS and \$4.5 million to the Judicial Department. Designates Oregon Worker Relief as a fiscal agent. Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Keeping families together
- Lack of access to lawyers during deportation proceedings
- Innovation Law Lab Program
- Equity Corps of Oregon Pilot
- Due process needs
- Case outcomes tied to whether the person has an attorney
- Valuing the contributions of all Oregonians

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Respondents appearing in Immigration Court do not have guaranteed access to counsel, because deportation is a civil, not criminal matter. Nationally, from 2007 -2012, 37 percent of all immigrants were able to secure counsel in their removal cases. Unrepresented respondents are almost five-and-a-half times more likely to lose their deportation case than those who have an attorney. In addition, persons involved in deportation proceedings often have difficulty accessing other needed resources.

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Senate Bill 1543 would create a statewide universal representation program to provide for certain immigration services, including legal services, access to community-based navigators, and referral coordination.