



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

Ted Wheeler, Mayor
Carmen Rubio, Commissioner
Dan Ryan, Commissioner
Jo Ann Hardesty, Commissioner
Mingus Mapps, Commissioner

February 9, 2022

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
900 Court St. NE, HR B
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

The City of Portland strongly supports SB 1543, which will expand universal legal representation. The bill reflects a community-centered effort to provide those in detention centers or facing deportation proceedings and refugees with access to legal services and service navigators. The City of Portland has a population of approximately 86,000 immigrants, over 18,000 of which are undocumented and might be able to benefit from this program.

In 2018 the City of Portland joined Multnomah County and the State of Oregon to help fund and launch Equity Corps, which is Oregon's first publicly funded universal representation program. The program provides pro bono legal representation to individuals in removal proceedings. If passed, SB 1543 will build on this program to create a statewide infrastructure for immigration legal defense. West coast cities, such as Seattle and San Francisco, have already implemented programs similar to Equity Corps. Oregon can be a leader in providing equitable representation for immigrants.

SB 1543 extends dignity and respect to people by offering legal counsel to those who cannot afford it. Our obligation to provide these services does not stop at a person's citizenship. Fundamentally, the bill will make our communities safer. We want Portlanders and Oregonians to feel safe regardless of documentation status. When people feel safe, our communities are safer.

SB 1543 helps preserve the integrity of our institutions, extends dignity and respect to Oregon residents, and makes our communities safer. We respectfully urge your support.

Sincerely,

Ted Wheeler
Mayor

Carmen Rubio
Commissioner

Dan Ryan
Commissioner

Jo Ann Hardesty
Commissioner

Mingus Mapps
Commissioner