



Date: February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
To: Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation  
From: Crystalyn Black, Policy Analyst for the Urban League of Portland  
Re: Universal Representation 2022, SB 1543

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Crystalyn Black, and I am a Policy Analyst with the Urban League of Portland and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 1543. The Urban League of Portland is one of Oregon's oldest civil rights and social service organizations, empowering African Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment, health, economic security, and quality of life. We do this by investing in stable housing; through workforce development; community health; education and well-being; for our youth, adults, and seniors. Our culturally specific programs and services, combined with our powerful advocacy and civic engagement, empowers Black communities to thrive across Oregon and SW Washington.

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1543 as we believe that immigrants need legal support for deportation proceedings. Every person should have their fair shot in court regardless of where they were born or citizenship status. Due to insufficient legal representation, immigrants are unable to exercise their lawful right to remain in the United States. Immigrants facing deportation need to be given the opportunity for their case to be fairly represented in court with appropriate legal counsel and/or support. The Urban League of Portland supports passage of Senate Bill 1543, in hopes, its passage will lead to a more just and inclusive Oregon for our immigrant neighbors.

The immigration legal process is complex and can function as a barrier, even for those with a strong legal case. **Representation by an attorney is the single most outcome determinative factor in deportation proceedings. Representation by an attorney improves someone's chances of staying with their family by 457 percent.** Individuals with representation are 15 times more likely to even present a case to remain lawfully in the United States than those who lack counsel. This indicates that when someone has legal support, representation, and resources, their experiences with the United States legal system can be more equitable and result in due process.

Every person must have the opportunity to live a healthy and safe life. Many of the people that need representation are asylum-seekers, who have faced violence and intimidation in their home country. They live in fear of the horrific incidents they have experienced, and they deserve the chance to be seen as Oregonians. They are our fellow employees, students, church members, and community members. Immigrant parents are often essential workers, who contribute to society as farmworkers (the majority coming from Mexico and the Caribbean), food-processing workers, housekeepers, construction workers, landscapers, caregivers, and day laborers. They are crucial in Oregon's foundation, economy, livelihood, communities, and sustainability.



**Urban League**  
of Portland

*Empowering Communities. Changing Lives.*

Senate Bill 1543 provides the opportunity to keep families whole as well as build and support communities.

The groundwork to tackling universal legal representation is already in place. With the passage of Senate Bill 1543, we will be able to expand programs such as the Equity Corp of Oregon pilot program. The Equity Corp of Oregon pilot program has successfully defended 1,349 Oregonians from unlawful or unjust deportation since its implementation in 2018. **Oregonians are relying on you to protect the rights of every person who calls Oregon home. We urge you to support Senate Bill 1543. Thank you for your time.**

Respectfully,

Crystalyn Black  
Policy Analyst  
Urban League of Portland  
Phone: (503) 280 - 2600  
Fax: (503) 281 - 2612



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of Portland