

2/7/2022

Re: Yes, to Universal Legal Representation

Good afternoon, my name is Magali. I live in Forest Grove, Washington County, and I am a full-time student at Portland Community College. Today I came to talk in favor of the Oregon House bill SB 1543. Bill that supports the rights of the habitants of Oregon, who believe in Universal Legal Representation for all. Oregon has a considerable number of immigrants living in its state.

According to the data of the American immigrant council "One of every ten Oregon residents is born outside the country, and one in nine residents has at least one immigrant parent." This bill is significant to thousands of people who are in situations of deportation and who, due to lack of a lawyer or money to pay for one, lose the right to a fair trial. Oregon has thousands of immigrants working to sustain its economy, making them a fundamental part of the state. According to the census, in 2018, 432,410 immigrants were 10% of the population, and in March 2020, Oregon was the home to 9710 active DACA recipients. The immigrant population covers a significant part of our state labor as agriculture, manufacturing, food service, and construction.

This support can help many immigrant Oregonians provide legal support in deportation situations. According to Equity Corps, approximately 80 percent of all the unrepresented Oregonians in deportation cases will be deported by the Portland Immigration Court criteria. The right of representation could avoid this kind of situation; however, many of the immigrants do not have the right or the economy to have a lawyer who represents their interests. Some other cities and states have invested funds to support the representation in cases of deportation, as is the example of the states of California, New York, Chicago, among other cities that are working with similar models as the Equity Corps.

HB 3230 is a proposal of a bill that offers the opportunity to help and support Universal representation in cases of immigration. This bill could work through a non-profit organization that can support with legal representation to thousands of cases in the process of deportation. As an immigrant and resident of the state, I feel the duty to raise my voice in favor of my community. I had family members, friends, and acquaintances who love and call Oregon their home and work hard every day to contribute to the state's economy and pay their taxes. However, when they are in an immigration case, they do not have the resources to have legal representation. Unfortunately, many of them do not have the economy to pay a legal representative and have lost their right to be represented in a just way. This support is also of their families, the economic and social welfare in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to give my testimony in support of SB1543. I respectfully request your vote to support the bill SB 3230 because the universal Legal Representation can provide more opportunities to our communities, state stability, and protect the rights of everyone who contributes, and Oregon is their home.

Thank you,
Magali