

Dear Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation,

My name is Maggie Hanngian and I live in Hood River, Oregon, and I am writing as a concerned community member.

I am writing in support of SB 1543 which would provide immigrant Oregonians with legal support during deportation proceedings. Despite a new president and administration, Oregon's immigrants are still very vulnerable to deportation which is why we need accessible, culturally responsive, and community focused legal services.

Many people in removal proceedings have valid legal claims to remain in the country and continue to contribute to Oregon's communities, but have no way to articulate these claims without the assistance of counsel. This bill safeguards due process by allowing immigrant Oregonians to access the rights afforded to them under existing law.

**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.**

SB 1543 further expands the successful Equity Corps pilot program funded by Multnomah County, the City of Portland, and the State of Oregon to create statewide infrastructure for immigration legal defense.

Oregon is home to thousands of immigrants and refugees who live in urban and rural areas statewide, and are critical to the state's cultural and economic vitality. Immigrant Oregonians work in key Oregon industries, are essential workers, and own small businesses that contribute to the vibrancy of our communities.

The community I grew up in, Hood River, Oregon, is home to many immigrants and refugees. Our famous orchards, their rolling valley views, and their yearly yield of fruit are like the engine that drives the economy of the entire town, and they are cared for largely by these communities of immigrants and refugees.

When I was younger, I worked alongside Hood River youth for nearly ten years. Many of the kids who were involved in my work were low-income, and many were from immigrant families. The father of one of the kids I worked with had already been deported, and suddenly their mother came under threat of deportation, too.

If the deportation process was allowed to continue, massive harm would've been done to this family, and the surrounding community most definitely would have felt their absence — I know I would have. In response to this threat, community members came together to source financial support so that the mother was able to receive legal representation by an attorney who spoke her native language and was able to protect her legal right to living in the United States. But that's not how our system should work. Immigrant families shouldn't have to rely on the goodwill of others simply for the right to live where they have every right to. According to the Oregon

Center for Public Policy, one in every 10 Oregon children live with a family member without legal status. Those numbers add up fast, and since immigrants are so integral to the state's cultural and economic vitality, that is why having access to culturally-responsive, free, and accessible legal services to keep them united as a family and as a community is critical.

Immigrants and refugees are the ones driving the engine not only for Hood River's economy and flourishing, but for nearly every community in Oregon. If Oregon lawmakers value the vibrance of these communities and their continued existence, every one of them should be in support of SB 1543.

Thank you for protecting the rights of everyone who calls Oregon home and supporting their ability to thrive. By doing so, you are ensuring that Oregon is a place that values families and communities.

Sincerely,

Maggie Hannigan