

Submitter: Kimber Nelson

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110
Implementation

Measure: SB1543

SUBJECT: Yes on SB 1543

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and members of the Senate Judiciary
Committee,

My name is Kimber Nelson and I live in Portland and I am writing as a nurse and a concerned Oregonian. I support 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.

I have worked with many immigrants and refugees professionally over the past 20 years, and have seen firsthand the contributions they make to my community, and heard the powerful stories they have about their struggles to escape dangerous or hopeless situations, create a new home in the U.S., and reunite or form intact families here. I want and need people like this to be part of my community, and to do this people need functional legal representation. According to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, one in every 10 Oregon children live with a family member without legal status so this is a big issue for the future of our State.

For these reasons, I support this bill. We must protect the rights of everyone who calls Oregon home and support their ability to thrive. By doing so, we can continue being a place that values families and communities.

Thank you.

Kimber Nelson, RN