

02/09/2022

Milka Mendez

Ciudad: Forest Grove

Re: Support-SB 1543

My name is Milka Mendez, I live in Forest Grove Washington County. I am here to testify on behalf of Flor M. Osorio in support of SB 1543. I have permission to share this story.

I have a brother a few years younger than me, very hardworking and responsible. He and his partner have always worked very hard to give the best to their family. They are very protective and always kept their family very close, until unfortunately an act of injustice to the dignity of the human being occurred.

One day he and his partner decided to legalize their relationship through marriage, so they went to court to process his license, but when he left he was detained by ICE agents and taken to a detention center. His partner, who took a few minutes longer to leave, was fortunately not detained by ICE. She watched the arrest from the inside. She knew that if she went out to support her partner she would also be arrested. With great sadness, she made the decision not to go out because their 3 girls were waiting for her at home. It was very sad for her to return home without her partner and not knowing what to tell her 3 little daughters who love their father.

She immediately contacted a lawyer to legally represent her partner. The lawyer asked her for a fee of \$3,500 to start her case, as the days went by he asked her for another \$1,500. She used all their savings and gave it to him. She just wanted to prevent the father of her daughters from being deported because this separation would cause a great pain in the lives of their girls. Now she was alone, she had to pay all the expenses of the house alone, she also had to get more money to pay for legal representation.

When she ran out of resources, she sought help from her relatives, who also supported us with as much as we could to be able to get him out of the detention center and avoid deportation.

We all hear in the news the mistreatment suffered by many immigrants in detention centers. Many think that they are exaggerated, they think that they want to play the victims or that they deserve it. No gentlemen, no human being deserves to be tortured just for the simple fact of seeking a better future.

My brother was subjected to a lot of physical and psychological abuse and day after day he endured torture for love of his family. Unfortunately, his wife could not get more money to continue paying his lawyer's expense and my brother was deported even though he had the possibility of being able to stay here, which is why I support SB 1543. This fund will allow many people who do not have the economic resources to be legally represented.

On this occasion, 3 girls were separated from their father even though they were very young and have suffered a lot emotionally and financially, so I ask you to support SB 1543 to prevent other human beings from being deported solely for not having enough money to cover expenses of a lawyer.

Dear Representatives, thank you very much for your attention. Can I count on your support?