

**Advocating for Equity and Diversity throughout Oregon**

Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

For the record, we are Jackie Leung, Co-Chair of the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA), and Melina Moran, Chair of the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA). We are writing to you in regards to SB 627, which allocates funds for purposes of deposit into the Universal Representation Fund, to provide legal services to individuals dealing with immigration.

OCAPIA and OCHA serves the people of Oregon to empower and support our constituents through our special roles as policy advisors to Oregon state policy makers and leaders. OCAPIA and OCHA are catalysts that empowers partnerships between state government and our community in rural and urban areas to ensure success for all Asian, Pacific Island, Native Hawaiian, and Latino Oregonians by addressing longstanding and emerging issues at the policy level including but not limited to social, political, legal, and economic equity. Both OCAPIA and OCHA have several statutory duties, all of which revolve around advocacy and equity of our seven strategic priorities: Education; jobs and the economy; healthcare; justice, safety, and policing; stable families and housing; environmental justice; and civic engagement.


During the 2022 legislative session, SB 1543 passed, declaring access to universal representation for Oregon residents with immigration needs. SB 627 provides funding for the Universal Representation Fund, to ensure the promise made in 2022 is realized, and all Oregonians, no matter their immigration status, have access to immigration services.

Oregon is an immigrant state. Much of Oregon's workforce are made up of immigrants. According to the American Immigration Council, "One out of every ten Oregon residents are born from another country"<sup>[1]</sup>. Immigrants make up the backbone of Oregon, from hospitality (e.g. restaurant, bars, and hotels), agriculture<sup>[2]</sup>, manufacturing<sup>[1]</sup>, healthcare<sup>[1]</sup>, and construction<sup>[1]</sup>. Due to reduced numbers of immigrants arriving in Oregon, there has been an increased labor shortage<sup>[3]</sup>. The drop in immigration numbers has affected Oregon's workforce.

SB 627 would provide proper immigration coverage for low-income immigrants who otherwise would not have access to adequate or responsive attorneys.

We urge you to support SB 627, providing funding into the Universal Representation Fund to ensure that all Oregon residents have access to affordable, reliable, and knowledgeable immigration attorneys.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Leung




Melina Moran

Sources:

1. American Immigration Council. Factsheet: Immigrants in Oregon.  
<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-oregon#:~:text=Oregon%20has%20a%20sizeable%20community,at%20least%20one%20immigrant%20parent.>
2. City of Portland, Immigrant and Refugee Program,  
<https://www.portland.gov/civic/immigrants/about>
3. Villamarin, E. 22, April 2022. San Quintin News. Statewide labor shortage linked to decreased immigration. <https://sanquentinnews.com/statewide-labor-shortage-linked-to-decreased-immigration/>



<https://www.oregonadvocacy.org/> 

503.302.9725 

[oaco.mail@oregon.gov](mailto:oaco.mail@oregon.gov) 

PO Box 17550, Portland, OR 97217 