

**Oregon State Bar testimony on
House Bill 3176
House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services**

March 8, 2023

Chair Reynolds, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony on House Bill 3176, which would create a new welcome and reception program for immigrants arriving in Oregon. The bill would require the Department of Human Services to contract with the Oregon State Bar to provide fiscal and regulatory oversight over any funding used for immigration related legal services.

Improving access to the justice system is a key part of the Oregon State Bar's core mission. The OSB Legal Services Program has consistently recognized immigration matters as an underserved legal need; in the [Barriers to Justice Report on the 2018 Oregon Legal Needs Study](#), immigration legal issues were identified as the most harmful legal issues for Oregonians with low incomes.

Background. Over twenty-five years ago, the Oregon Legislature established the Legal Services Program to manage state funding of civil legal aid, to draft regulations in the form of Standards and Guidelines, and to regulate the delivery of services and use of funds. The LSP's regulatory framework helps ensure that legal aid provides cost effective, high-quality services that are responsive to client needs throughout the state. This expertise has already been adapted to help immigration legal service providers maintain similar high standards of quality and efficiency in their services. As part of the Oregon State Bar, the LSP also has access to the Bar's experts in applying the *Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct* to the practice of law.

Strategic Planning. The LSP has experience ensuring providers are responsive to community and regulatory guidelines. Over the years, the LSP model has been highly effective at directing state funds where the need is greatest, and has done so while keeping administrative costs extremely low. A key tool in achieving this outcome has been statewide community focused strategic planning.

Shared strategic planning where all providers coordinate on how to best reach the Oregonians most in need of assistance is a product of the LSP funding model. Shared planning means all providers are linked by a responsibility for every Oregonian in need, no matter what county a particular provider serves. When funding changes, instead of there being competition between

providers, resources are adjusted between providers to best serve the needs of the client community in accordance with the shared strategic plan.

The Legal Services Program stands ready to adapt and respond to the unique needs of this new program.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Oregon State Bar.