



TO: Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services  
FROM: Jose Reyes Ramirez, Engagement Coordinator, Basic Rights Oregon  
DATE: 02/06/2024  
RE: Support for HB 4085

Dear Chair Reynolds and Members of the Early Childhood and Human Services Committee

My name is Jose Reyes Ramirez (he/him/el) and I am writing on behalf of the organization Basic Rights Oregon to urge you to vote YES to advance HB 4085.

Basic Rights Oregon is the largest and oldest LGBTQIA2S+ advocacy organization in Oregon. The LGBTQIA2S+ community is all-encompassing of diverse communities who share similar goals of attaining legal and living equality. Over 267,000 LGBTQIA2S+ immigrants are undocumented, highlighting the salience of HB 4085 to our organization.

The criminalization of immigration has caused LGBTQIA2S+ immigrants to face a unique set of challenges in the United States. One of the most common barriers that undocumented immigrants face is the legal system. The legal system is harsh and has punitive policies that include detention, deportation, and isolation for those entering the United States.

Additionally, queer immigrants are oftentimes seeking asylum in the United States. LGBTQIA2s+ immigrants may be fleeing from their home countries due to discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. For undocumented individuals in detention, it is incredibly difficult for them to obtain legal services. Lack of legal services and of representation may force individuals to be deported to their home countries where their lives could be at risk.

It is imperative that undocumented immigrants have access to free legal services because it ensures that their rights in the United States are safeguarded. Legal representation offers immigrants an opportunity to remain with their families and to avoid any form of unjust prosecution in the United States or back home. HB 4085 ensures that there is due process, and it grants eligible undocumented immigrants an opportunity to become U.S. citizens.

Moreover, the legal process is very costly. For an Adjustment of Status, the standalone application will increase to \$1,440 on April 1. The legal process is not linear and rising costs can be the difference between permanent protections or deportation. Eliminating the financial burden that comes along with the pursuit of legal protection would guarantee immigration relief for many undocumented immigrants.

Lastly, we urge you to pass HB 4085 as it reduces the barriers for queer and undocumented immigrants in the state. BRO is committed to our community which includes immigrants.

Together we can work towards creating an inclusive society where we are all valued, respected, and able to live our lives free from discrimination.