



March 17, 2025.

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

From: Victoria Francis, Deputy Director of State and Local Initiatives, American Immigration Council

**RE: SB 703 Relating to immigration; declaring an emergency. Directs the Department of Human Services to provide grants to nonprofit service providers to assist individuals who are noncitizens to change their immigration status or obtain lawful permanent resident status.**

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

My name is Victoria Francis, and I am the Deputy Director of State and Local Initiatives at the American Immigration Council (the Council), an organization that works to advance positive public attitudes toward immigrants and create a more welcoming America—one that provides a fair process for immigrants and adopts immigration laws and policies that take into account the needs of the U.S. economy.

I am writing to express the Council's strong support for SB 703, which would establish a grant program to help noncitizen Oregonians change their immigration status or obtain lawful permanent resident status. Programs that help individuals access and apply for immigration statuses they may be eligible for under federal law provide stability to families and individuals who call Oregon home and contribute to Oregonians' individual and collective economic well-being.

Immigrants are a powerful force for community stability and renewal. They reinvigorate neighborhoods and business corridors, boost our tax base, and enrich our cultural landscape while filling essential roles across industries. When immigrants have access to stable immigration status—such as lawful permanent residency—these benefits only grow.

Increased access to services for noncitizens to change their immigrant status is often the first step to naturalization, an important marker of immigrant integration that also has far-reaching economic implications. Naturalization leads to immigrants' improved access to higher education, economic advancement, home ownership, entrepreneurship, and more. In fact, national studies suggest that if all immigrants who are eligible to naturalize became U.S. citizens, their earning potential could increase by 8.9 percent.<sup>1</sup> **In Oregon, the Council estimates that only 47.6**

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<sup>1</sup> Enchautegui, Maria E. and Linda Giannarelli. 2015. "The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities." Urban Institute.

**percent of the state's 425,600 immigrant residents are naturalized citizens, with approximately 81,000 likely being eligible to naturalize.<sup>2</sup>**

To help illustrate what Oregon stands to gain by prioritizing grants to nonprofit service providers to assist noncitizens to change their immigration status or obtain lawful permanent resident status, my organization has conducted quantitative research on the impact immigrants already have on the state.<sup>3</sup> What we found is striking:

- **As of 2022, Oregon was home to 425,600 immigrants, making up 10.0 percent of the state's population.** These residents are critical to addressing the state's workforce shortages across the skills and education spectrum, with 82.0 percent of immigrant Oregonians being of working age (ages 16-64), compared to 61.4 percent of their U.S.-born counterparts.
- **Immigrants in Oregon contribute millions in taxes and consumer spending.** In 2022, immigrant households in the state earned \$19.7 billion in income, with \$3.6 billion going to federal taxes and \$1.7 billion to state and local taxes, leaving them with \$14.4 billion in spending power that was reinvested back in the state.
- **As of 2022, 196,000 immigrants in Oregon were eligible to vote,** with 202,700 having naturalized and 81,000 being eligible to naturalize.
- **Undocumented immigrants contribute significantly to Oregon's workforce and economy.** In 2022, undocumented immigrants made up 4.0 percent of the state's workforce despite comprising only 2.8 percent of the population. They had a shared household income of \$3.8 billion, paid \$309.3 million in state and local taxes, and had a combined spending power of \$3.0 billion.

Oregon is in a position to take decisive action to support the needs of all Oregonians by improving access to nonprofit service providers who can help noncitizens access services to change their immigration status. I encourage the Senate Committee on Judiciary to support the passage of SB 703.

Thank you for your consideration,

Victoria Francis  
Deputy Director of State and Local Initiatives  
American Immigration Council

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<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/oregon/>.

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