



Church World Service (CWS) Testimony Endorsing Senate Bill 703 - *Relating to immigration; declaring an emergency.*

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and members of the committee,

Church World Service urges you to support [SB 703](#) - *Relating to immigration; declaring an emergency*, which provides grants to nonprofit service providers to offset the cost of legal fees that eligible immigrants incur in the process of adjusting their immigration status.

More than half of foreign-born Oregonians have become U.S. citizens since immigrating to the United States, and many others would like to become U.S. citizens to fully participate in the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

However, tens of thousands of Oregonians, including [108,000 long-time residents](#), still lack immigration documentation and are unable to pursue a path to permanent status, due to the high cost of legal services in the state, application fees associated with certain immigration pathways, and challenges navigating the complex immigration process. Naturalization can be an overwhelming process, leaving many families in a position where they don't even know where to start unless they are afforded legal representation.

[Senate Bill 703](#) directs Oregon's Department of Human Services (ODHS) to provide grants to nonprofit service providers who assist people navigating the process of applying for permanent protection. The bill provides that nonprofit grantees would cover a portion of eligible immigrants' legal services fees on the basis of their income, covering all costs for the lowest income individuals.

Church World Service again urges you to vote yes on Senate Bill 703 to remove financial barriers to adjustment of status so that more Oregonians can live with the stability and security of permanent protections. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Danilo Zak
Director of Policy
Church World Service