

Submitter: Sharon Hawks

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB703

Honorable Legislators,

As a sanctuary state Oregon stands for the safety, dignity and human rights of all of its residents. I am writing in support of SB 703, providing grants to nonprofits to help immigrants improve their legal status. Many people who would want to improve their status are hindered by the cost this would entail.

The rules around immigration law are well-known to be Byzantine in their complexity and working through such documentation requires much work and with the aid of a lawyer. The cost of applying for citizenship is over \$1000 with lawyer's fees on top of that, making application for citizenship or other improvements in immigrant status prohibitive for many people. Some of the expense of this program to the state will be offset by documentation that will allow immigrants to apply for federal programs if needed, and so reducing costs to the state. The nonprofits, to whom this program being proposed in SB 703, would have to verify their work, being required to report on the success of their grants.

There are good reasons to raise the experience of immigrant families, many of whom have been working, raising their children and paying taxes in this state for many, many years. These improvements for them would help create healthy families by further providing them with access to good work and healthcare for themselves and for their children. This frees them from fear, making them able to carry out their lives as any other person in the state is privileged to do. Helping families to stabilize their lives through proper documentation will have benefits beyond their immediate selves, creating more productive conditions for business and commerce in the state through a more secure, dependable workforce, a workforce that has become essential to our state economy. We cannot leave these deserving people behind. They merit our respect as Oregonians and for the hard work they do every day in our communities. I strongly urge you support SB 703. Thank you.