

Submitter: Peggy Thatcher Aguilu  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB703

My Name is Peggy Thatcher Aguilu and I live in Portland Oregon.

I am a member of Augustana Lutheran Church and a Council Member. I am so a CASA (Court appointed Special Advocate) and worked with 4 children who arrived in the U.S. without their mother (though she wanted to come and communicates regularly), and I have been a business owner with many employees in various places of their immigration status.

I enthusiastically support SB 703/HB 2788, Pathways to Protection and Citizenship. SB 703 allocates money to the Department of Human Services to award grants to nonprofit legal service providers that cover the cost of clients legal services. This is a bill that will save and strengthen families, improve outcomes in ODHS programs, bolster our workforce, and strengthen the general fund by helping immigrants transition from state services like Healthier Oregon to OHP.

I have found in my work and voluntarism, that many of my employees wanted family to join them from Mexico, had been in the U.S for decades with their children serving in the military -- but still could not get legal status etc. I was always short of employees to cover staffing for my growing business and a way for small businesses would have allowed my operation to grown and better serve the needs of the community. I and my employees were on the lookout for ICE. I was not sure of their status, but they had worked for big companies like McDonalds. How much better it would have been to have them grow and become established in a more welcoming environment.

As a CASA, if I could have received help the 4 children I was assigned to would have had their mother here to raise them -- saving a ton of money, and allowing the children ages 7 - 14 nurturing with their Mom . I tried avenues, but we were turned down by non profits with a lack of funding.

Thank you for your time and for standing up for all Oregonians. My employees and I (as the business owner) all paid all applicable payroll and income taxes. I sold my business in 2019.

Sincerely,

Peggy Thatcher Aguilu  
Augustana Lutheran Church Council Member