

Submitter: Sarah Marble
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB703

Chair Prozanski Vice-Chair Thatcher and members of the committee

My name is Sarah Marble and I am a constituent from Portland.

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.

Up to 1/3 of Oregonians without an immigration status are actually eligible under federal law for an immigration status. That is over 25,000 Oregonians who, but for the high cost of legal services, are living in fear, out of the employment mainstream, and unable to support their families. Immigrant and refugee communities make up more than 13% of our state's workforce, yet legal costs prevent many Oregonians from obtaining a more secure immigration status.

There are immigrants in my community that I care deeply about. I have seen first hand the toll that stress and fear take on families when one or more members does not have a secure status. I have also seen how people's lives are improved when obstacles are removed and they are able to get a more secure status. We should do this because it is the right thing to do. But if you don't care about that, we should also do it because it will benefit everyone, not just immigrants. We will see economic benefits, since immigrants can offer their skills and knowledge in the traditional job market and in entrepreneurship. We will see cultural, health, and social benefits in our communities.

Thank you for your time and for standing with all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Sarah
Portland