

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Anthony Castaneda, SEIU 503

Date: 3/19/2025

RE: Support for SB 703

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

My name is Anthony Castaneda, and I am writing on behalf of SEIU 503 in support of 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 client's legal services. This is a bill that will save and strengthen families, improve outcomes in ODHS programs, and bolster our workforce.

Immigrants are integral to Oregon's most important industries, such as food service, agriculture, manufacturing, and transportation. 60% of our agricultural workers and 14% of Oregon's service workers are undocumented. 1 in every 3 undocumented Oregonians is eligible for a more secure status and protection from deportation but the cost of legal services prevents many from obtaining that status. These are hard-working men and women who are at greater risk of exploitation by their employers because of the threat of deportation.

SB 703 is an investment in Oregon's future. More secure immigration status means higher earnings, educational attainment, higher tax contributions, and long-term economic stability for our state.

Thank you for supporting all Oregonians,

Sincerely,

Anthony Castaneda

SEIU 503