

Chair Prozanski Vice-Chair Thatcher and Members of the Committee,

My Name is Emely Castaneda and I am a constituent from Central Point, OR (Jackson County).

I enthusiastically support SB 703/HB 2788, Pathways to Protection and Citizenship. This bill came before you as HB 4085 in 2024, and passed this Committee unanimously. HB 2788/ SB 703 is a bill that will save and strengthen families, improve outcomes in other DHS programs, bolster our workforce and strengthen Oregon's general fund.

Up to 1/3 of Oregonians without an immigration status are actually eligible under federal law for an immigration status. That is thousands of Oregonians who, but for a few hundred dollars, are living in fear, out of the employment mainstream, 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. This bill's one-time support of Oregonians to offset these legal costs will stabilize our workforce.

These are hard working individuals who wish to contribute and be positive role models for their families and neighborhoods. They simply need a chance. You have the power to do that; support SB 703/HB 2788, Pathways to Protection and Citizenship.

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

Sincerely,

Emely Castaneda

3/19/25

Central Point, OR (Jackson County)