

Submitter: Kenneth Crouse
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB703
Yes to SB 703/HB 2788 Pathways to Protection and Citizenship

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

My name is Kenneth Crouse and I am a volunteer with Oregon Community Asylum Network. I live in Lebanon in Linn County.

I wish to speak in support of SB 703/HB 2788.

It is well-documented that access to a competent immigration lawyer is vital to obtaining a positive outcome in one's final hearing in immigration court. I want to make a case as to the urgency of immigrants having legal counsel at this point in time, not just in court, but in changing their status to be more protected and be proactive about it.

Many immigrants arriving in Oregon were given permission to enter the U.S., but do not have a permanent legal status. This includes Afghans who were evacuated after the fall of Kabul, people who were admitted under a parole program, and asylum seekers who crossed the southern border. SB 703/HB 2788 Pathways to Protection and Citizenship would provide funding for these Oregonians to obtain protected status or change to a more permanent immigration status.

The new Administration has taken steps to remove the protections of large numbers of immigrants. These actions include:

1. Termination of humanitarian parole for Afghans, those who arrived under the Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Venezuela parole program, and people protected by Uniting for Ukraine.
2. The cancellation of Temporary Protected Status for immigrants whose home countries are not safe.
3. Threats to remove asylum seekers with pending cases.

For those who have been in Oregon for less than 2 years, the threat is greater, as they could be targeted for expedited removal with no due process.

The immigrant support group Welcome.us strongly recommends that newcomers

with temporary protections apply for an alternative legal status based on guidance from legal experts.

The passage of SB 703/HB 2788 would help ensure that more of our immigrant friends and neighbors are protected from predatory new immigration policies.

Thank you,
Kenneth Crouse