



IMMIGRATION COUNSELING SERVICE

SINCE 1978. A NON-PROFIT LAW FIRM PROVIDING IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES TO PERSONS FLEEING PERSECUTION, FAMILIES SEPARATED BY BORDERS AND THOSE SEEKING A PATH TO CITIZENSHIP

March 21, 2025

Oregon Senate Committee on Judiciary
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 703

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

Immigration Counseling Service (ICS) submits this testimony in support of SB 703. ICS is a community based non-profit law firm that has provided immigration legal services to low-income immigrants, refugees, and their families for over 45 years. ICS is led by a board of directors with deep knowledge of the challenges faced by immigrants and refugees. Our staff has decades of experience in helping our vulnerable neighbors work their way through a complex system. ICS is deeply rooted in Oregon and as the first, and still the only, fully independent immigration legal services nonprofit in the state, has the support of a diverse array of community groups, from the Oregon Farm Bureau to Our Children Oregon. ICS also has run the state's only federally funded legal services program for Unaccompanied minors for many years. We have just received notice this week that this funding, over \$1M, is in imminent danger of being cut.

ICS is among the few legal services programs in Oregon that provides the full range of legal services needed by immigrants and their families.

SB 703 provides critical funding to support the work of ICS in assisting immigrants and their families to obtain their legal status. This can be through permanent residence (green card), naturalization and citizenship, family-based applications, deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA), or asylum.

ICS, as well as other providers, also provides deportation (removal defense). SB 703 recognizes that funding for immigration law projects which provide a path to

legal status is essential to the stability and well-being of our Oregon's communities:

- **Legal status and naturalization bring financial stability and prosperity for Oregonians from both immigrant and on-immigrant backgrounds.**
- **Legal status dramatically reduces the risk of exploitation and fear.**
- **Immigrants make significant contributions to Oregon's economy, and providing a pathway to legalization will significantly increase those contributions.**

While deportation defense is a necessary tool in the toolbox to assist immigrants and their families, SB 703 recognizes the critical importance of also funding the myriad other affirmative legal pathways to legalization so that they can be fully integrated into the community that is their home.

Sincerely,

Frank Garcia

Frank Garcia
ICS Executive Director