



Providing Help, Creating Hope

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

My name is John Herrera, and I am the Director of Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services. On behalf of Catholic Charities of Oregon, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for SB 703, the Pathways to Protection and Citizenship.

In Oregon, it is estimated that up to one in three undocumented individuals may be eligible for legal protection under existing federal law, yet many face significant barriers in accessing the legal assistance they need. Tragically, without proper legal support, many of our most vulnerable neighbors remain in uncertainty and fear.

More than half of Oregon's foreign-born population has successfully navigated the path to citizenship since arriving in the United States. The majority of immigrant Oregonians deeply value the opportunity to become naturalized citizens and fully participate in the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship. However, for tens of thousands of these residents, the prohibitive cost of immigration legal services remains an insurmountable barrier.

Proactive and affirmative immigration legal services will not only provide clear pathways to citizenship, but also bring much-needed safety, security, and stability to Oregon's immigrant communities. Furthermore, such services will help prevent the painful and often devastating separation of families who are otherwise eligible for protection under U.S. immigration law.

We believe that SB 703 will make a meaningful difference in the lives of thousands of Oregonians, and we respectfully urge the committee to support its passage.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Herrera", written over a printed name and title.

John Herrera
Director, Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services

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