

Chair Prozanski Vice-Chair Thatcher and members of the committee

My Name is Lisa Ramsey and I am a retired IT professional.

I enthusiastically support 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, bolster our workforce, and strengthen the general fund by helping immigrants transition from state services like Healthier Oregon to OHP.

Up to 1/3 of Oregonians without an immigration status are actually eligible under federal law for an immigration status. That is over 25,000 Oregonians who, but for the high cost of legal services, are living in fear, out of the employment mainstream, and 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.

I have helped our church over the past 25 years, adopt and support several families who were refugees from civil wars in Burundi. My family and church family know how difficult it can be to help the adults obtain employment sufficiently enough to just feed their families, then add on the struggle to raise enough money for legal fees to pay for the US legal processes for immigration and eventually citizenship status. I especially support the bill when it is tied to helping persons following the US Legal processes and attempting to immigrate legally.

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

Sincerely,

Lisa Ramsey  
Beaverton, Oregon